ENVER HOXHA

The Anglo-American Threat to Albania

Memoirs

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Memoirs of the National Liberation War

THE INSTITUTE OF MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES
AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY
OF LABOUR OF ALBANIA

THE «8 NËNTORI» PUBLISHING HOUSE
TIRANA 1982

«THE ANGLO-AMERICAN THREAT TO ALBANIA»
is another book in the series of Comrade Enver Hoxha's memoirs from the time of the National Liberation War.

It reflects events he lived through, his personal impressions, and gives conclusions, which provide lessons for all periods, drawn from the hostile activity carried out openly or behind the scenes, against our National Liberation Movement, our people's revolution and socialist Albania by the Anglo-American bourgeoisie. It brings out clearly the clash between the diabolical plans, attempts, manoeuvres and concrete activities of Anglo-American imperialism to put Albania under its sway, on the one hand, and the vigilance, the blow for blow struggle of the Communist Party of Albania and its General Secretary, the leader of the Army and the National Liberation Front and the whole patriotic Albanian people, Comrade Enver Hoxha, on the other hand, to discover, unmask, defeat and destroy the imperialist strategy and tactics in regard to Albania.

These memoirs now being published, were written in 1975.

The book is available in Albanian and several foreign languages.

I

A LITTLE HISTORY

Albania — a token for barter for the «British Lion». Disraeli and Bismarck: «We are not interested in a few Albanian cottages.» Zog — the «open-door» policy. Chamberlain and the fascist occupation of Albania. The anti-fascist coalition. Vigilance of the CPA. Intelligence Service prepares its contingents for Albania. Section D and the SOE. Alarm in London. New plans, old aims.

Both the imperial governments of Great Britain of past centuries and its royal governments in recent years have always been hostile to the Albanian people. The Tories and the different political currents that kept the Empire going, and the two parties, the Tory Party and the Labour Party, which have taken turns in running the country more recently, have always regarded Albania as a token for barter in their countless

deals with the other great powers to maintain the world hegemony of the «British Lion».

Like many other countries, Albania has not been recognized by any of those different British governments which have safeguarded the domination of British capital over the peoples and the world, as a state and a country which, through innumerable efforts and sacrifices through the centuries, have fought against various invaders, to be free and sovereign, but on the contrary, the inhabitants of this «Land of the Eagles» have been considered a savage, barbarous people, without culture, at a time when, despite their small numbers, these people have been indomitable and no less cultured than the people of Scotland or Cornwall.

It took a long time before a few publicists, some occasional amateur scholar or great poet of the romantic era, such as Byron, spread a little light among the British people about Albania and the Albanians, about their culture, their strong and generous character, their hospitality and kindness towards friends, as well as about the stern, unyielding fighting spirit in the face of many savage enemies which has always characterized them.

The enslaving imperialist colonial policy of Britain prevailed over many countries and peoples. Britain engaged in a thousand and one mano-

euvres to get the riches of the world into its clutches, in order to fatten the lords and the barons and build up the «glory» and power of the Empire. Britain encroached on other countries, extending its influence like a noxious weed. Under the cloak of science, teams were sent to discover Africa, and wherever they went, the British «scientists» planted the flag of John Bull, and after them came the lords with their soldiers, who put down the mutiny of the Sepoys (**1**) and occupied India, people like Kitchener (**2**), who exterminated the Boers with fire and steel. Indeed Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli) and Gladstone added the title of Empress of India to the other titles of Queen Victoria. This was colonialism, which plundered the fabulous riches of India, the rubies and emeralds of Burma and the diamonds of South Africa, looted the gold of those countries and enslaved their peoples spiritually, economically and physically. The inhabitants of the countries which came under its yoke, Britain used as cannon fodder for its own aims.

In the various colonial wars which Britain waged against other imperialist powers, it put the Indian detachments, the Bengal Lancers, the Afghans and other oppressed peoples in the front

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1 National uprising in India (1857-1859) against the British overlords in which the Indian peasants, craftsmen and especially soldiers (Sepoys), etc. took part.

2 H. Kitchener (1850-1916) - British earl and field-marshal, war minister (1914-1916), savage colonizer of Africa.

line to deal the first blow for the benefit of their masters. All these colonial wars were fought so that the fields of England could be turned into golf courses for the lords, so that the food for the British Isles and all the raw materials for industry there would come from these colonies and the entire Empire on which, as Kipling, that ardent supporter of British expansion and colonialism, the bard of this Empire and author of the *Jungle Books* wrote, «the sun never sets.» The law of the jungle was applied in this empire. Everything had to serve it. The British bourgeoisie even used Darwin's scientific theory to justify the monstrous crimes it committed. Distorting this theory, it invented «social Darwinism» to «prove» that a bigger and more powerful people should eliminate or assimilate a smaller people, hence, it supported the reactionary concept that «the big fish eats the small.»

In such conditions and with such methods Britain insinuated herself everywhere by means of its Intelligence Service (SIS), discovered oil fields, captured Persia and other countries, countered the ambitions of Czarist Russia, defended the Ottoman Empire, and when the latter truly became «the Sick Man of the Bosporus», collaborated with Bismarck's Germany at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, attacked the Peace

Treaty of San Stefano, jealously guarded the strategic positions of the Mediterranean such as the Dardanelles, Suez and Gibraltar, guarded the Persian Gulf and made herself the «Queen of the Seas», the protagonist of the gunboat policy. It provoked the «Fashoda incident»(**1**)and many other such things.

When Britain had become one of the main colonial powers, when the British dukes were wallowing in gold and the duchesses could barely support the weight of their diamond necklaces, diamond rings and diamond tiaras, what importance would they give to Albania and its heroic struggle for freedom and independence?

At every crucial moment of our history, and especially when the Albanian people were fighting heroically, arms in hand, against the Ottoman Empire, Britain always took the side of Turkey. At the Congress of Berlin, the Prime Minister of Britain, Queen Victoria's favourite, Lord Beaconsfield, who, when he returned to London from Berlin, made the pompous declaration that he had brought «peace with honour», and the Chancellor of Germany, Prince Bismarck, the founder of

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1 In September 1898, the British army, aiming to occupy the whole of the Nile Valley, threatened the French army at Fashoda, the Sudan, and demanded its immediate evacuation of that inhabited centre. In March 1899, the British and French governments reached agreement that Britain would hold the Nile Valley and France the western regions of the Sudan.

the Second Reich, did not even deign to listen to the Albanian delegation which the Albanian League of Prizren (**1**) had sent to Berlin to demand and defend the rights of our people. At those difficult moments, when our long-suffering people had taken up arms in the insurrection against the Turks and the Serbian chauvinist running-dogs in the service of imperialists, to oppose the partitioning of our Homeland amongst the Serbs, Montenegrins, Turks and others, to win their autonomy, Bismarck and Disraeli disdainfully told our glorious forebears: «We are not interested in a few Albanian cottages.»

Later the delegates of our people, Ismail Qemali and Isa Boletini, went to London and demanded of the Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, that Albania should be defended. «We shall not allow you to partition Albania.» our great diplomat Ismail Qemali told him. «We shall take up arms and fight, as we have always done.» The British minister turned a deaf ear.

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1 On the eve of the Congress of Berlin, which was to revise the decisions of the Treaty of San Stefano, delegates from all the Albanian regions gathered in the town of Prizren on June 10, 1878, and decided to form a political and military union which took the name «The Albanian League of Prizren» and fought for self-government, national unity and for the defence of the territorial integrity of Albania which was threatened by the chauvinist ambitions of the neighbouring states.

Later at Versailles, Lloyd George with his henchmen, acting like his predecessors in London, partitioned Albania and so, our parents were, as always, obliged to take up arms to fight the invaders of our country. After the First World War, too, the British took the lead in intriguing against our country, meddling in our affairs and infiltrating the spies of their Intelligence Service into Albania. They were unable to change the direction of the Vlora uprising in 1920 which drove the Italian occupation troops into the sea.

The British Intelligence Service, together with Eyres, the minister of Great Britain in Albania, did everything in its power to weaken the Democratic Government of Fan Noli in 1924 and to secure from it the concession over the oil at Patos, Ardenica and elsewhere.

The self-proclaimed King of the Albanians, Ahmet Zog, who came to power with the aid of imperialists, pursued an «open-door» policy with Great Britain and the United States of America, as with many other countries, and signed treaties and agreements with them. The aims of these two imperialist states were to get possession of our coastline which dominates the Straights of Otranto, to transform Albania into a bridgehead for penetration into the Balkans, to exploit our natural riches, etc. Zog granted these states «most favoured nation» status, and this greatly facilitated the penetration of their capital into Albania. He went

even further in this direction by granting the Anglo-Persian Oil Company almost a complete monopoly for the exploitation of oil in Albania and concluding a provisional trade agreement with Britain, which in 1931 was replaced with a navigation and commercial treaty on the basis of «reciprocity» and the «most favoured nation» clause. As to what reciprocity this implied, it is sufficient to mention that in 1932, Albania imported from Britain goods to a value of 1,586,200 gold francs and exported goods worth a sum of only 6,665 gold francs to Britain. The British minister in Albania, Sir Robert Hodgson, who became Zog's intimate adviser in the 30's, faithfully carried out the anti-Albanian policy of his government. Through its officers, Percy, Stirling, Hill, Cripps and others seconded to Zog, British imperialism, together with Zog, kept the club, the prison and the hangman's noose ready to suppress any movement of the Albanian people. With the aid of its friends, as well as through the intervention of the British, when they reached agreement with the Italians over the division of their spheres of influence, Mussolini's Italy secured the concession over the Albanian oil which was in the hands of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

A similar situation existed in Zog's relations with the United States of America also. He gave legislative endorsement to the letter sent by the Albanian government in June 1922 to the govern-

ment of the USA through which the USA was granted «most favoured nation» status, hence in practice was given the keys to Albania. This was one of the most disgraceful documents, one of the most dangerous to the independence of our country. For its part, the USA never granted Albania «most favoured nation» rights. Six months after coming to power, Zog leased 51,000 hectares of land to the Standard Oil Company of New York for two years, for 30,000 dollars and reduced customs tariffs on American imports.

Apart from this, Zog also opened the doors to agents of the American espionage service who came as missionaries, like Kennedy, as philanthropists and educators, like Erikson and Harry Fultz. The latter became director of the Technical School in Tirana and was an important cadre in the American intelligence service. All these people and others not only gathered information, but as was proved later with the sabotage in Maliq and Kuçova (today Stalin City), and the trial of the traitor deputies, etc., they had prepared their agents who would work in the future, openly or under cover, against the Albanian people and the people's state power which they would set up.

The Anglo-American imperialists, those savage and determined enemies of the Albanian people, have always used our country as a means of exchange in their international transactions. When the despotic brigand, Zog, was in power,

they tried to make Albania directly dependent on them, politically, economically and militarily, but ran up against the competition of other capitalist countries, especially fascist Italy. In the 30's, because of the general crisis in the capitalist world and the division of the spheres of influence amongst the great imperialist powers, and especially as a result of the massive penetration of Italian capital into Albania, the economic links of Albania with Great Britain and the United States were weakened. Zog became a direct tool of Italian fascism and threw the doors wide open for its colonization of Albania which led later to its occupation. However, time was to prove that the Anglo-Americans never relinquished their own ambitions towards our country, although they allowed Italy to operate freely in Albania, naturally for definite aims.

Nevertheless, the British government was pleased to see that Zog was becoming a lackey and agent of Mussolini. Britain wanted Italy to occupy Albania, because it planned to set Italian fascism and German nazism, which it was financing, like dogs to attack the Soviet Union.

Proof that this plan existed can be seen in the indifferent attitude of Chamberlain when Mussolini's Italy attacked our country on April 7, 1939. Chamberlain, who knew in advance what was going to occur, went fishing that day. This was the same Chamberlain who had approved the

«Anschluss», who had signed the Munich Agreement selling out Czechoslovakia, and finally handed over the keys of the defence of the Empire to Churchill.

The statement which the British prime minister made in the House of Commons on April 6, that Great Britain had «no direct interests» in Albania, gave Mussolini a free hand to carry out his plans towards our country. This stand by Britain was greatly in favour of Italy because it gave legal sanction to its special interests in Albania.

On the day of the invasion of Albania by the Italian blackshirts, Mussolini sent a telegram to his colleague in Britain, Chamberlain, in which he wrote that the events in connection with Albania would not affect relations between their two countries and would have no repercussions on the status quo in Europe and the world. This occurred one year after the time when, in the context of their imperialist rivalry, with war imminent, an agreement had been signed between Great Britain and Italy on the maintenance of the status quo in the Mediterranean. But what was the worth of such an agreement between imperialist wolves! History provides many examples which show that agreements and treaties between imperialist powers are expedients, compromises to reconcile them for a certain time, but which are violated as

soon as the situation changes and other interests dictate.

Immediately after the aggression against Albania, the British government made a deal with Italy to the detriment of the Albanian people. In return for the withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain and a guarantee of the independence of Greece, Great Britain recognized the fascist occupation of Albania.

It is unnecessary to dwell at length on how the Second World War developed, but I think it necessary to mention certain key moments to give a better understanding of the activity of the British missions in Albania at the time of the National Liberation War.

It is known that the efforts of Britain under Chamberlain and France under Daladier allegedly to appease Hitler and reduce his appetite for «living space» were in vain. The Munich Conference and the worthless document that emerged from it, which Chamberlain waved before the British people when he came off the aircraft as an «historic document» which allegedly meant «peace in our time», was nothing but the white flag of surrender which Britain waved before the nazi aggressor.

The hopes of the British and French bourgeoisie were that the Hitlerite war machine would be turned against the Soviet Union and they did

everything in their power to urge Hitler in this direction.

Britain intended to kill two birds with one stone: both the Soviet Union and the Third Reich. However, things did not turn out as London intended.

Bourgeois France refused the demand of the Soviet Union that Czechoslovakia should be defended with arms according to the existing treaties. Faced with the threat of Hitlerite Germany, Stalin proposed to Britain and France that they should form a joint front, but these two capitalist powers scorned this proposal, which could have saved the situation, because, as I pointed out above, they hoped that Hitler would attack the Soviet Union. This being the case, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. This was a necessary pact which gave it time to make further preparations for defence.

Hitler's war took a direction different from what the British and French imperialists intended, because, after the attack on Poland and its occupation, he turned on France which capitulated almost without fight. Germany was preparing to attack Britain, too, which remained alone in the war against Hitlerite Germany. The latter sized up its strength, especially its air and naval forces, and violating the non-aggression pact, turned and launched a furious and perfidious attack on the land of the Soviets.

Under the conditions in which Hitlerite Germany was getting all the capitalist countries of Europe into its clutches and the British Isles themselves were under imminent threat, when the British colonies and the American possessions in the Pacific were falling one after another into the hands of militarist Japan, for fear of the dangerous proportions which the Hitlerite «blitz-krieg» had assumed, for fear that if the Soviet Union were defeated, too, Germany would emerge more powerful and it would become even more difficult to withstand its attacks, the imperialist chiefs considered that the need had arisen to balance forces, therefore, Britain and later the United States of America, were obliged to turn to the Soviet Union for a common fight against fascism, but seriously this time. In this way, the anti-fascist Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition was created against the nazi plague, which attacked and occupied Yugoslavia and Greece as well. Meanwhile the Albanian people had risen to fight fascist Italy which had already attacked and occupied our country.

In their Anti-fascist National Liberation War the Albanian people were not alone. Lined up beside them now were the Soviet Union, headed by Stalin, in the first place, and all the peoples of the world who were fighting fascism, including the British and American peoples. We were parti-

cipants in the great Anti-fascist Coalition, in the alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain. We had to consider this alliance useful and necessary, and support it for the destruction of the nazi beast, and therefore we explained its importance to the Party and the people.

In our assessment of this alliance we had to be neither sectarian nor liberal, but while considering it fruitful in the context of the fight against nazism, it was necessary that we should never forget what the governments of the United States of America and Great Britain represented for our people, that we should never forget their savage nature as capitalists and colonialist oppressors, that we should never forget the countless wounds they had inflicted on the body of our Homeland. We had to put our trust in our Party, our people, our rifles, in the Soviet Union and Stalin. We had to fight to win our freedom with sacrifice and bloodshed, and we must never allow foreign enemies to gamble with the fate of our country and our people as in the past.

In one of his speeches Churchill launched the slogan: «Set Europe ablaze.» In launching this slogan, he had two aims: first, German fascism was to be fought by the peoples, «assisted» with arms and military missions, and second, these missions, wherever they were sent, were to orga-

nize pro-British reaction and fight the communist parties and the national liberation fronts which were led by these parties. In other words, while he declared «Set Europe ablaze», his real aim was to extinguish the fire that had been kindled and ensure that the missions sent everywhere achieve those objectives which the War Office, the Foreign Office and the Intelligence Service dictated to them. He wanted the peoples and the communists to be weakened by the war and reaction to emerge from it strong, hence, the fig was to ripen and fall into the mouth of the British.

The reader will allow me to present a very short history of the plans which were concocted in London against our National Liberation War before the British missions came to Albania.

In October 1939, with the aim of securing first-hand information about the situation in our country, the British government appointed a consul-general based in Durrës. However, London was not content with this act alone which, in fact, was recognition of the new status of Albania. In the spring of 1940, it asked the people of its secret information service in Belgrade to prepare a report about the development of events in Albania and ordered the creation of an office for Albania under Section D. Julian Amery, who up till that time had been press and propaganda secretary in the British Legation in Yugoslavia, was

charged with this task. He prepared this report with the help of Gani and Seit Kryeziu, degenerate elements of the feudal Kryeziu family of Kosova, inveterate spies who had frequently changed their bosses and now placed themselves in the service of the British.

Similar sections for Albania were established in Athens with the long-term British agent, Mrs. Hasluck as adviser, and in Cairo, attached to the Allied Headquarters, with Major Cripps, a former instructor of Zog's gendarmerie, as its chief. Thus, the British Intelligence Service created its network all around Albania and was preparing to send its agents here. The office for Albania, Section D, made direct contact with various elements, Albanian emigrants, old «friends» of Britain, «monarchists», «republicans», «liberal intellectuals», etc. who lived in Yugoslavia, gathered them round itself and created a kind of organization, the so-called «United Front» with all these elements who dreamed of a repetition of 1924, when external and internal reaction organized Zog's return to Albania.

At this time, after having slunk from one capital of Europe to another, like a thief with his stolen gold, Zog arrived in London with all his suite. The British government regarded him as a valueless card, because he had been discredited, did not enjoy the sympathy of the Albanian people and had no party in support of him in the

country. Its consul-general in Durrës had informed it of this fact. Therefore, it wanted to expel Zog from Britain, but sensing the danger, Zog informed the British government that it was his intention to place himself at the head of the Albanians abroad in the service of the allied military plans. After this, the Foreign Office changed its mind. It allowed him to stay in England on condition that he did not engage in political activity without its permission. Possibly the chests of gold which Zog had with him may have played their part in this change of mind in the Foreign Office. In any case, the British government reserved the right to use Zog as a card to be played if some favourable opportunity presented itself. It considered that Zog might serve as a figure round whom to gather various elements to be used for its own interests if German nazism were defeated and favourable conditions created as in the past.

For the time being, however, the British could not use him. They had to work under cover with someone else to reach the point where he could be used. Apart from the Kryezius, the British had their eyes on Abaz Kupi, who was «against» the Italians and pro-Zog, as a suitable person with whom to manoeuvre. To this end, London ordered Section D in Belgrade, which was now called the Special Operations Executive (SOE), to make contact with him. Amery went to Istanbul and together with Stirling, another former instruc-

tor of Zog's gendarmerie, who was now operating in Turkey, met Abaz Kupi. After a little bargaining, Amery left with him for Yugoslavia whence, with many other «patriots» and «politicians», Abaz Kupi was to be smuggled into Albania in order to organize Zog's former officers, *bajraktars** and others, in the «war against the occupiers»!

Meanwhile Zog, afraid that he might be expelled, and not being informed of the plans which were being hatched up, proposed to London, as a proof of his loyalty to the allies, that he should open a fighting front from Salonica, at the head of the Albanians who were in Istanbul. Afraid of a political confrontation with Greece, the British government sought the approval of the Greek government. The Greek prime minister Metaxas refused and torpedoed Zog's plan. Thus, Zog, that servile lackey of Great Britain, remained «in cold storage».

In the SOE of Belgrade matters were proceeding more rapidly than before. Many elements had been gathered around it, including, apart from the Kryeziu brothers and Abaz Kupi, Muharrem Bajraktari, Xhemal Herri and others. Most of them were supporters of Zog. One fine day even the «communist» Mustafa Gjinishi turned up at the SOE and his presence was a matter of great rejoic-

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* Clan chiefs (Alb.).

ing for the British. Oakley-Hill, who for eight years on end had been in Albania as organizer of Zog's gendarmerie, was now running the office for Albania under the SOE in Belgrade.

Considering the situation suitable for operations in Albania, Hill entered Albania in April 1941, at the head of a small force comprised of elements which he had gathered together and financed. All this was done allegedly to save Albania from the Italian fascists, but, in fact, was aimed to create the conditions in which our country would enter the sphere of British influence in the future and to avoid the creation of any other resistance centre outside British control, which might fight the occupiers and eliminate the influence of Great Britain. However, in the difficult situation which was created, especially with the German invasion of Yugoslavia, the army of which resisted no more than a week, the plan of Lt.-Col. Hill was foiled. This compelled him to gather together the heads of the small force with which he had entered Albania for the last time in Tropoja and charge each of them with a special task: Gani Kryeziu was to operate in Kosova, Abaz Kupi was to go to Kruja, close to the government in Tirana, while Mustafa Gjinishi was to enter the ranks of the Albanian communist leaders. For the time being, their task was to fight under the disguise of «ardent patriotism», and as soon as

the conditions were ripe, they were to come out in the open like snails after a shower.

While these «patriots», each with a bag of gold sovereigns, dispersed within Albania, the British officer returned to Belgrade where he surrendered «with honour» to the Germans and, through the mediation of the American legation in Yugoslavia, a little while later returned safe and sound to London.

The resistance and armed struggle of our people against the fascist occupiers, which began on April 7, 1939, continued uninterruptedly and was further extended and strengthened, especially after the formation of the Communist Party of Albania on November 8, 1941. After this historic date, the fight of the Albanian people entered a new phase, in which it was fiercer, well organized and becoming devastating for the occupiers, quislings and traitors. This aroused concern in the bourgeois world.

During 1942 the Foreign Office displayed greater interest in the Albanian question. It had heard that the Communist Party of Albania had been formed. At the end of 1942, its interest turned to alarm, especially when it received the news that the Communist Party of Albania had organized the Conference of Peza, was leading the National Liberation Front and that the National Liberation Movement was assuming wide proportions. And all these things had occurred after

Churchill's statement that «His Majesty's Government, have the cause of Albania very much at heart». The alarm was sounded. The SOE in Istanbul proposed that an Albanian government should be created with the aid of the British; the SOE insisted that Gani Bey Kryeziu and Mehmet Konica should be included in this government. A letter was sent to Muharrem Bajraktari through Mihajlovic, with whom he collaborated, in which he was told, «It is up to you to lead the war,» and he was assured that Zog was not going to return to Albania.

Events were moving rapidly. In November 1942 the allies landed in North Africa. On December 17, the British foreign secretary made a statement in the House of Commons, which had been approved by the War Cabinet at the beginning of December, in which he spoke of the «desire» of the British government that Albania should be liberated, its independence re-established and the question of its borders examined at the Peace Conference. The Soviet government also made a statement in which it expressed its sincere desire for the liberation of Albania and the re-establishment of its independence and spoke in terms of admiration about our fight against the occupiers. The government of the USA also made a statement on this question. Undoubtedly these statements were moral-political support for our Natio-

nal Liberation War, promised the independence of the country when the war was over and helped to strengthen the international position of Albania at a time when all the peoples had risen to their feet to fight fascism and nazism.

The revolutionary situation in Albania aroused debates among the circles in London which were involved with Albania. However, their hearts were warmed and their hopes raised by the fact that their friends, Abaz Kupi and Mustafa Gjinishi, had managed, in the meantime, to enter the National Liberation Front, while outside this Front, and as a counter-weight to it, an organization had been created which called itself the Balli Kombëtar, at the head of which were people known to the British Intelligence Service — feudal lords, big landowners and merchants, bajraktars, bourgeois intellectuals, senior clergy and other sworn enemies of the communists.

In these circumstances, Britain decided to dispatch its military missions to Albania. Their purpose would be to sound out the situation on the spot, to give their centre accurate information about which way the wind was blowing, to learn what the National Liberation Movement really was, to establish links with the Balli Kombëtar, to assist the «friends» sent in by the SOE, and most important, to do their utmost to ensure, under the disguise of «aid», that the people's

revolution would fail, both in Albania and everywhere else.

These were the main aims with which the British missions were sent to Albania, some of them through Greece and others by air.

In these reminiscences of mine I am revealing precisely the underhand struggle which these missions waged, although they had no success, because our Party and people foiled their every action and plan. We could not allow the bitter history of the past to be repeated, and it was not repeated.

Our Party and people defeated the Italian fascists and the German nazis with the rifle, while defeating Anglo-American imperialism with heroic resistance and resolute and intelligent diplomacy, which was inspired by Marxism-Leninism and based on the great experience of the people and their great leaders through the ages.

II

AN UNINVITED MILITARY MISSION

Extension of our National Liberation Movement. Manoeuvres of reaction. The first British military mission in Albania — McLean. The partisan zones are not inns with open doors. Empty promises. The «trips» of British officers — seeking «friends». Reaction enlivened. McLean's urgent request for a meeting — «a general will come to head the mission.» «Where is your centre, Major?» Measures to paralyze the diabolical plans of the British War Office.

The Party and the Albanian people were waging not only a fierce war against the Italian occupiers and the quislings, but also a sharp political struggle against the Balli Kombëtar. All over the country partisan çetas and battalions had been created and were attacking the Italian army on the roads, in the barracks and everywhere. The partisans were arming themselves in the course of the

fight by disarming the gendarmes in the quisling posts everywhere. Our war had developed beyond the phase of guerrilla actions in the cities, although these never ceased even when the armed struggle in the mountains assumed major proportions with çetas and battalions. Our Party was growing, extending in the military units and among the villages, where its cells and the national liberation councils were being created. The work of propaganda for the war against the occupiers assumed broad proportions. The city and village youth were filling the ranks of the partisan fighting units. Whole zones had been liberated, the people of these zones paid taxes to nobody, and tithes were abolished. In the liberated zones the land belonging to the quislings and traitors was made available free for the peasants who wanted to till it.

The Italian enemy made great efforts to suppress the National Liberation Movement in our country, especially by splitting it. To this end the Italian fascists began to collaborate more intensively with the Balli Kombëtar. In February 1943, Musa Kranja, one of the heads of the Balli Kombëtar in the Korça region, on the instructions of Faslli Frashëri and Stavri Skëndi, accompanied the Italian officer Angelo de Mateis, in making contact with Safet Butka to ensure that he colla-

borated with the occupiers against the National Liberation Movement. One month later, the commander-in-chief of the Italian troops in Albania, Dalmazzo, together with Ali Këlcyra signed the notorious «Dalmazzo-Këlcyra» protocol in which the Balli Kombëtar promised the occupiers that it would exert all its influence to prevent acts of sabotage and attacks upon them. They of the Balli Kombëtar acted in the same way with the Germans, too. It was Mithat Frashëri who «on behalf of the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar signed the circular which said among other things: «Since the most urgent need of our country today is for order and discipline, all the committees, commands and çetas of the Balli Kombëtar are ordered to cancel any operation against the German forces.» There are many such documents which speak of the «patriotism» of the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar, but this is not the place to dwell on them at length.

At the end of April 1943, the Party Committee of Gjirokastra region informed me that a group of British military men headed by a certain Major Bill McLean, equipped with arms and radio, had entered our liberated zones from across the Greek border, claiming that they were an official military mission sent to the Albanian partisans from the Headquarters of the Allied Mediterranean Forces, based in Cairo.

I instructed the comrades of the Party Committee of Gjirokastra region to hold the British, who had come from Greece, in Zagoria and to find out in detail who they were, what they called themselves (proving their identity with official documents), where they came from, who led them, what was their real task, etc.

I instructed the comrades: «You must interrogate them properly, so that they thoroughly understand that it is not so easy to enter the partisan zones, because they are not inns with open doors, therefore, in order to move within them, they must have special permits from the Partisan General Command.» I told the comrades, «You must do all these things so that the British see right now that we are not going to permit them to do whatever they want. Behave very correctly with them and see that they are fed if they don't have their own food. Do not accept money for the food if they attempt to pay you.»

The comrades did as they were instructed. After the group of British armymen, blocked by the partisans in a zone of Gjirokastra, saw that this country had a master, on May 1, 1943 they were obliged to send a letter signed by Bill McLean to the supreme authority of the National Liberation War in Albania — the General Council, in which, after saying that he had been sent from his Headquarters in Cairo as senior liaison officer to establish contact with the resistance movement

in Albania, he wrote: «I very much want to meet your Council as quickly as possible and receive information to transmit to Cairo so that supplies can be sent to you from there. Your movement will be supplied with materials from Cairo. We shall discuss matters of importance. My desire is to enter into the centre of Albania.» Apparently, SOE, with its centre in Cairo, had found the disguise to get into Albania: the dispatch of its agents as representatives of the Headquarters of the Allied Mediterranean Forces, whose aim was to enter «into the centre of Albania» in order to make contact with its old agents, to extend their ranks with new ones, to receive information from them, and set them new tasks, and to organize a movement in Albania under the direction and control of British missions, in the interests of the policy and strategic plans of Great Britain.

In our reply we told them that we agreed that such a mission should come to the National Liberation General Council, but we could not accept it in the centre of Albania in particular, if it were not provided with proper official documents from the Headquarters of the Allied Mediterranean Forces.

The members of McLean's mission remained there until they were provided by their Headquarters with documents as official representatives. On our orders, in June the comrades in Gjirokastra sent them to us in Labinot with strict

security measures so that nothing could occur on the way. They arrived exhausted from the trip. I received them the next day. McLean, who presented himself as the chief of the mission, seemed quite young, no more than 30 years of age, slim, not short, rather tall, with very regular features, and a cold, intelligent, clean-shaven face. He was fair-haired, with intelligent blue eyes, with the look of a savage cat about them. As we learned later, McLean was of the Scots Greys Regiment and was a trained agent who had served in the colonial wars in Palestine and elsewhere.

I asked him how he had travelled.

«Like a partisan,» he told me. «But the partisans in Gjirokastra held me up and made me lose valuable time. Our Headquarters in Cairo is disturbed about this.»

«You are an officer and know the wartime regulations,» I said. «It's not so easy for a stranger to cross the border where military forces are operating. The enemy always tries to penetrate, to gather information about our situation, to carry out acts of sabotage, or launch surprise attacks on us, but we Albanian partisans are not asleep. You have proved this for yourselves when you entered our zones. Of course you are not enemies, but since you were not known, first of all, it had to be proved who you were. You had not informed us beforehand that you were going to come, therefore, our comrades in Gjirokastra were only doing

their duty. We beg your pardon for the delay we caused you. Reassure your Headquarters that you are in safe hands, amongst your allies, with the Partisan General Command.» That settled this question. Now he had to explain to me the purpose of his coming, what he wanted and what he was going to do, etc.

I asked: «What is your mission?»

In essence Major McLean (later he was promoted to colonel and after the war he became a Conservative MP) said:

«We are the first British military mission sent to the Albanian partisans. The purpose of the British government which has sent us to you is that we should inform it about the situation in the country and the war of your people against the Italian occupiers, and after we have done this, to transmit to our Headquarters your views about the war and your needs and requirements for the purpose of waging the war, which you will present to me.»

«What do you know about the Albanian people's war against the occupiers and quislings in our country?» I asked.

«We know nothing at all,» he said smiling.

«Then, since you know nothing at all, in regard to Albania, you are still in the time of Chamberlain,» I said.

McLean's eyes narrowed.

«From April 7, 1939, when Chamberlain

spent the weekend fishing, to this day,» I told him, «the Albanian people have been waging a ceaseless war against the Italian fascists, the quislings and the traitors.»

I told him in detail about the titanic war of our small but valiant people. I told him of the heroic deeds of the people and the partisans, as well as of the atrocities, murders, the burning of villages committed by the Italians and their collaborators. I spoke of the methods of the fascist propaganda to split us and demoralize us, but which had no success in our country, because the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front and the partisan forces had consistently exposed and foiled the plans of the enemies.

«But where do you find the weapons, Mr. Hoxha?» asked McLean. «Russia is a long way off and cannot supply you. Do you have factories here in the mountains?»

«No, we have no arms factories in the mountains, but we find arms amongst the people. It is true that ten days after he came to power in 1924, the brigand Zog proclaimed the law on general disarmament of the population, but in fact the Albanians hid away their weapons, as they have always done, because no one has ever been able to disarm them. This is a tradition amongst the Albanians which has been handed down from generation to generation. In connection with this.» I continued, «they say that something interesting

occurred between your former Foreign Minister Edward Grey, and our great patriot and fighter Isa Boletini. It was a time when black clouds had gathered again in the Albanian sky, when Albania had been caught up in the maelstrom of the predatory ambitions of its chauvinist neighbours, and when the Ambassadors' Conference of 1913 was unjustly leaving half of Albania outside its state borders. And which half? Kosova and other regions, every inch of which the Albanians have drenched with their blood, fighting for liberation from Turkey. The patriots Ismail Qemali and Isa Boletini went to London to meet Grey, who at that time was chairman of the Ambassadors' Conference, to express to him their protest over the injustice that was being done to our country and to transmit to him the unbreakable vow of the Albanians that they would fight to the end for the unity of all the territories handed down to them by their forefathers. Before he entered Sir Edward Grey's office, at the request of the guards, Isa Boletini left his pistol in the ante-room. After the talks, Grey in a half-jovial fashion said to Isa: 'Mr. Boletini, we have done here in London what the Turkish pashas were never able to do.' Understanding that Grey was referring to his being disarmed, Isa looked your minister right in the eye and answered with a laugh: 'No, never on my honour, not even in London.' And he drew a loaded revolver from inside his vest.

«So, you see, this tradition is one of the 'factories' where we get our weapons, Major. Other 'factories' supplying our weapons are the Italians' depots in their posts and in the cities, our actions on the national roads and on the battlefields. When we started the war we did not have sufficient weapons, but our people sing a song: 'If you have no weapons, find them, from the hands of the enemy seize them.' And this is what we have done all along. We seize the weapons from the hands of the Italians in action, we attack and capture them.

«You mentioned Russia. I tell you that if Russia were close, we are convinced that it would have supplied us with weapons, because it is our ally, just as you are. And you ought to give us weapons, because we need them. One cannot eat weapons, but can only fight with them. And we want them to fight with.»

«I am authorized to tell you, Mr. Hoxha, that within our possibilities we shall supply arms to all those who fight,» replied McLean.

«This is good news you bring me,» I told him. «Here in Albania only the partisans and the people organized in the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front are fighting.»

«But, Mr. Hoxha, it seems to me there is another organization that is fighting here in Albania, called the Balli Kombëtar,» said the British Major.

«You see, Major,» I said, «you do know some-

thing about Albania. Apparently you have been informed about the Ballists (**1**), and since you ask me, I shall tell you: it is true that the Balli Kombëtar exists, but its leaders are linked with the Italians. They do not fight the Italians, but are organizing for war against us. The only 'war' they wage is against the roast chickens and lambs, which they steal from the suffering peasants.»

I explained the situation thoroughly to the British officer who, without doubt, knew what the Balli Kombëtar was.

«In case you do not know,» I said in an ironical tone, «I must inform you that there are also Zogites, whose chief is Abaz Kupi, alias Bazi i Canës, who even takes part in our National Liberation Front.»

Of course he knew about this, but I persisted:

«Do you know this, Major?» This time he was obliged to admit it.

That closed this chapter.

McLean continued:

«Mr. Hoxha, we are not going to involve ourselves in politics here, because we are simply soldiers, and everything military is of interest to us.»

«In what sense do you use the expression 'everything military'?» I asked him.

His eyes looked savage again.

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1 Members of the Balli Kombëtar.

«We are interested in everything of a military nature connected with the Italian and German armies. We are interested in the forces deployed against you here in Albania, the names of the detachments, their armament, the tactics which they use in mountain warfare, etc.,» he replied.

«Now I understand,» I said. «And we are ready to inform you about all these things.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» continued McLean, «you understand that Albania is small on the map, but it is big when you have to travel it on foot, therefore it is difficult for us to fulfil the task charged to us properly, without having comrades to help us.»

«We are allies against the same enemy,» I said, «hence we are your comrades-in-arms.»

I knew what he was getting at, therefore I took the opportunity to speak about the situation on the fighting fronts and asked him to explain to me how the war was going in other countries, how the Greek and Yugoslav partisans were fighting (I was acquainted with the situation, but wanted to know his opinion of their struggle).

However, the wily officer gave me a very short summary of his opinions and finally said:

«I have been out of touch for some time while travelling through the mountains on foot and I'm not in a position to explain things to you.» And he came to his main purpose. «It is difficult to do this job properly alone. It is true that without

your aid we can do nothing, but we have been charged to ask you to study the possibility of dropping in several other missions so that we can assist your partisan forces better.»

«This is a problem which we shall study and we shall talk about it again. However,» I told the British major, «while endorsing what you said, about your not being involved in politics, I want to make it clear to you, in the first place, that in our ranks we do not permit any politics pro the occupiers and their tools. We do not permit any propaganda in favour of the enemies, under whatever mask it may be disguised. On the other hand, we allow any amount of political and ideological struggle against the fascist occupiers and their tools.

«The second question which I must make clear to you is that your mission must not meddle in our internal affairs. You must request anything you need through our Command or through our delegates in the regions where you are located.

«The other main question is in connection with the aim for which you have come: you must supply us with arms, munitions and clothing. We shall present our requirements to you without delay,» and I concluded by saying:

«I'm convinced that everything will go well between us, Major. As you see, the conditions for good understanding are not complicated, they are acceptable and applicable, provided the good will exists.»

Major McLean replied:

«We agree. Let us get down to work. Allow us to drop in some other missions and you allocate the places and regions in which to drop them.»

«All right,» I said, «we shall study this and decide the places for the parachute drops, but, first of all, trials should be carried out in these places by air-drops of military material and after that the British officers can be dropped, because human life is more valuable than weapons, is it not?»

What could McLean say? We ended our discussion and agreed to meet again later.

I immediately informed the regional committees of the Party and the partisan commands and units about the arrival of the British military mission to our Partisan Headquarters. I explained under what disguise they had come, describing them as allies against the same enemy, but pointed out that their class nature, their aims opposed to our war, the Soviet Union, communism, must never be forgotten. I informed them that right from the first meeting with the British I had put a tight rein on their desires which were simply to gather information and carry out espionage against our National Liberation War, our Party and the Partisan National Liberation Army. They wanted to gather information about everything, to learn our strength, tactics and strategy. They claimed the right to this information in «a friendly way»,

as our great «allies» in the struggle against the same enemy — nazi-fascism, boasted that they had come to assist us with weapons and clothing, and since it was impossible to supply us with food, to put at our disposal from time to time small contingents of «St. George's cavalry» (i. e., gold sovereigns) to enable us to buy food locally. On the other hand, they promised that they would publicize our National Liberation War.

«However, we accepted all these fine words with considerable reserve,» I told the comrades. «We did not readily swallow these 'promises'.» The chief of the mission, Bill McLean, was indignant when we set strict limits to what he could do and surrounded him with loyal and vigilant partisans, so that he could not move wherever it pleased him and would have to gather only the «crumbs» that our comrades allowed him, and not what he wanted himself. Therefore, I advised them to be correct and very vigilant towards the British.

«Possibly,» I told them, «several such British missions will come with our permission to our different zones. A **correct and vigilant** stand must be maintained everywhere! In no instance,» I instructed, «must the British be permitted to poke their noses into our internal affairs. Tight security must be maintained on all matters relating to the Party, its organization, orders and directives, and none of them, whether pro-communist or not, should know when, where and why its meetings

are held. **For them we are all partisans.** Military matters such as the organization of the partisan army, the number and composition of its units, its orders for actions, supplies, quantity and types of armament, all these and other data of an internal character must be kept secret. If they wish to be present at a battle take them along, **but inform them at the last moment and never disclose to them in advance your operational plan for the fighting.** Provide them without hesitation with any information that you have about the enemy occupier. Avoid allowing them to mix freely with the mass of the partisans so that they can indulge in loose talk, make promises or get up to dirty work. Urge them to drop us arms and demand this persistently.»

In this way, I prepared the comrades to take care and be forearmed against any manoeuvres of the agents of the Intelligence Service who, without doubt, would eventually try to corrupt weak and wavering individuals.

At a meeting I introduced Babë(**1**)Myslim to McLean. The first words that Babë said to the British officer were: «Ii you are good friends, you must drop us arms,» and added diplomatically, «and I believe you are good friends.» Mustafa Gjinishi played the role of interpreter.

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1 Dad — a title implying respect and affection.

In the end, we presented McLean with our list of requests for arms and told him, «You should begin to drop arms in Peza before anywhere else, because this is where the first partisan rifle was fired against the fascist occupiers.»

McLean promised. After some time they dropped us about a fifth of the weapons we asked for, all of them light weapons with little ammunition, as well as a few jackets and socks. Along with them they also dropped a new British mission for which we had given permission.

«With your permission, we shall send this mission to Dibra, to Baba Faja and Haxhi Lleshi,» said McLean.

I discussed this matter with Babë Myslim and we decided to give our permission.

«Haxhi and Baba Faja will know how to look after this 'guest' with his moustache which seems to be dyed with henna, who is to go to them,» remarked Myslim.

«We ought to have another mission attached to Mr. Myslim Peza,» said McLean, «because this is the most important centre of the partisans.»

«If Myslim wants it, let him decide,» I said.

«I agree, Comrade Enver,» said Myslim and, turning to Mustafa Gjinishi, said: «Translate to the gentleman that I agree to a mission's coming, but not more than three people and on condition that it doesn't meddle in our internal affairs; it is to have contact only with me and the commissar,

must have no contact with the reactionaries or with our enemies, and they must drop us arms.

«If the gentleman accepts these conditions,» said Myslim turning to me, «I agree, Comrade Enver, that a mission should come.»

In translating Babë Myslim's words into English, Mustafa Gjinishi swallowed, blushed, gripped the point of his nose between his two fingers and cleared his throat from time to time.

«Of course, we accept these conditions,» declared the British Major, who was inwardly seething with indignation.

When I went to the Korça region to make contact with the party comrades there and the partisan forces that were commanded by Teki Kolaneci, Riza Kodheli, Josif Pashko, Agush Gjergjevica, Asllan Gurra and other commanders and commissars of çetas and battalions, I heard McLean had appeared in those zones. At that time the Ballist çeta of Safet Butka and the Zjarrist(**1**) Fetah Butka, hiding under the reputation of the patriots of the past, Sali and Gani Butka, were moving around the villages of Kolonja and, while they abused our Party and the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, they

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1 This term was applied to the members of the Trotskyite «Zjarri» («Fire») Group which called itself the «Albanian Communist Party». It was smashed by our Party in March 1943.

collaborated with fascist Italy. The Ballists and their several newly-formed çetas did such things everywhere. Ali Këlcyra in several regions of the South, Zenel Gjoleka in Kuç of Kurvelesh, people like Koço Muka on the Coast and Qazim Koculi in Vlora and elsewhere acted in the same way. A certain Rahman Zvarishti, a vacillating individual who had been a commander of a partisan çeta, but ended up with the Balli Kombëtar, slithered around in the region of Korça. For the Ballists, with those brimless white conical felt hats bearing the eagle emblem on their heads, this was the phase of their appearance allegedly as a national organization. However much they posed as «patriots», it was clearly evident that they relied on the beys, aghas and corrupt intellectuals, who had nothing at all in common with the people and their war, but were linked in every way with the Italian occupiers and against the people.

One day that I was in Vithkuq, holding a meeting with Josif Pashko and other comrades, McLean came and found me there. I instructed the comrades to take him as far as possible into the mountains, where he would be close to the Leshnja Flat for a reason which I will explain below. They took him to the village of Shtylla.

I went up to Shtylla, met him and saw that they had given him two comfortable rooms, suitable for him to work in and to establish his

radio communications. I invited him to dinner in Behar Shtylla's house where I was staying. At dinner, of course, the conversation came round to weapons.

«Such a militant region as Korça does not have a single British automatic,» I told him. «The partisans are complaining and demanding that you drop them weapons without fail.»

As usual McLean had plenty of excuses.

«If you don't drop weapons here, the people of Korça won't let you go. They'll hold you prisoner,» I continued jokingly. Turning to Teki and Behar, I said to them, «Tomorrow take the Major to see the Leshnja Flat which is close by and very suitable for dropping arms.»

The following day the Major went to see it and when he returned I asked him:

«Well, what did you think of it?»

«Fine,» he replied.

«Then, give Major McLean the list of the arms you need,» I addressed myself to Teki.

Teki had overlooked nothing in what he asked from the British. «We might as well ask for them,» he told me, «although we know they won't send them.»

When he saw the list of requests McLean's eyes opened wide and he said:

«To bring all these things we'd need at least 30 aircraft.»

«Send 10,» I said. «But you'd better discuss

the matter with commander Teki, Major, and reach agreement with him.» The interpreter's surname was Plaku.(**1**)He was from Devoll and had gone to the American Technical School in Tirana in the time of Zog.

In the end some arms were dropped at Leshnja.

We had decided to attack the Italians on the Janina-Korça-Manastir road with our forces. We carried this action out with success. Many enemies were killed, trucks were burned and rifles captured.

Those were the times when we were trying to get the çetas of the Balli Kombëtar engaged in the fight against the occupiers. Some of our representatives went to talk about this with Safet Butka. However, Safet refused. The British officer heard of his stand and begged me to let him go, together with Commander Teki, to persuade him.

«You're wasting your time,» I said. «They won't fight, but nevertheless, we shall comply with your wishes.»

McLean went, talked with Safet Butka, but he still didn't want to fight.

«Well, are you convinced now about what I told you?» I asked the Major, who was sitting disconsolately before me after he returned from meeting Safet. «They are not going to fight.»

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1 Jorgo Plaku — martyr of the National Liberation War.

By this time there were four or five groups of the British mission in our country. McLean was their leader and Mustafa Gjinishi his friend.

One fine day, McLean came out with an «interesting!» proposal.

«I have been thinking, Mr. Hoxha,» he said to me, «that to eliminate bureaucracy, the requests for arms and munitions should not be made directly from your General Staff, but from the military zones where our missions are located. As well as that,» he added in a tone of pride as if he had discovered America, «the supplies should be delivered directly, without going through the General Staff. This will speed up...»

«No,» I interrupted. «I shall never allow such a thing.» This took him by surprise and he stared at me in astonishment. Then, recognizing the utter failure of the scheme he had hatched up in his «fertile mind», he dropped his head and, after a pause, changed the conversation. His cunning aim was foiled even before the words were out of his mouth. With this subtle tactic he wanted me to give him «official leave» to take over the reins of leadership of our people's war in a round-about way and to eliminate it. Moreover, by this means he wanted to corrupt our ranks from below, to compromise immature people with gold and, however things turned out, he would have them under his control. However, Albion suffered defeat on this road, too.

When we organized the 1st Brigade at Vithkuq, we invited McLean to be there. He was present at the celebration and the ceremony of handing over the battle-flag of the brigade.

McLean once made a visit to Shpirag. We appointed Koço Tashko as his interpreter. He had gone down from there to observe the positions of Kuçova. When they returned, a frightened and indignant Koço came to me and said:

«Find another interpreter for the Major, Comrade Enver, because I'll not go with him again. Do you know what he did? He stood on an exposed hill, wearing his red sash, and looked all round with his binoculars. If he goes on exposing himself in this way, the Germans will kill us one day.»

«But why did he put on the red sash?» I said.

«To show he is an officer,» said Koço, «so that in case of danger they will not kill him, but take him prisoner. They might not kill him, but they would shoot me on the spot.»

The comrades sent me a great deal of information showing that wherever the British missions were, they did their utmost to link up with reaction, tried to poke their noses into our affairs and quarrelled with our comrades.

Seeing the attempts of the British missions to inject their poison into our people and the

danger of their interference in our internal affairs, in August 1943, I considered it necessary to instruct our comrades at the base once again through a letter and make clear to them that the British had come for their own purposes, to poke their noses into our internal affairs, that they did not keep the promises they had made us about sending us arms and money. «Their tendency is to ask questions of anybody, any partisan or çeta commander, and from this to learn what is going on and get our army and our movement into their clutches. You must place several good comrades in their service, and they must stay with them wherever they go, avoiding contacts with people that you consider undesirable for them to meet.»* I repeatedly instructed them that they should not give them any information about our internal affairs.

Many times I had fierce arguments with McLean, not only over their failure to send us arms, but also over the many efforts of the British here to link up at all costs with the Balli Kombëtar, with reaction in Northern Albania and with the chiefs of reaction in Dibra and Macedonia. News reached me from Mat that the British mission was making the law there and that ample weapons were being dropped to the Zogites.

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* Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 1, p. 342, Alb. ed.

Immediately after the 2nd National Liberation Conference of Labinot, some comrades and I went to Peza. Only a few days had gone by since the capitulation of fascist Italy, and we had to follow the events in the capital closely — what would be done with the Italian army there, what turn would the situation in the Balkans take after this event, what would the allies do, would they land in these parts, as reports suggested.

The pressure and interference of the British officers became intense this time. However, the Party fought and was vigilant. Many comrades from the regional committees and our military units sent us indignant reports about the activities of our «allies». From Vlora they wrote that the British officer there insisted that his orders must be obeyed, because he received them from the «British government»! «Don't attack and disarm the Italians,» he told them, «ambush only German columns. If you attack the Italians I shall not give you my aid any ,more.» The report continued with the British officer's threats, «Don't attack Vlora, because the British forces will come,» or «if you're going to act, a delegate should come from the Front and one from the Balli Kombëtar, and we shall talk about combining, so that Vlora is attacked by the Front and the Balli Kombëtar simultaneously.» These were orders which ran counter to the line of our

Party and to the instructions of the National Liberation General Council. However, the comrades of Vlora paid no heed to the British officer. They applied our instructions without hesitation.

From Pogradec, likewise, they reported that the British officer, Captain Smiley, had ordered the partisan command there not to open fire on the Italians and to withdraw the partisans from the vicinity of the barracks.

For these reasons, and to remind the British officers once again that there was a strict limit to what they were allowed to do, at the beginning of October 1943 I sent the regional committees of the CPA a letter in which, among other things, I wrote that the British missions were simply representatives of the British army and as such they ought to support those who were fighting the occupiers; they had no right to meddle in any way in our internal affairs. I instructed that they should be told openly of our stand towards the Ballists and other traitors, and that they would be responsible to their government and to us for anything they did in favour of them and to the detriment of the Albanian people's war. I wrote to the party regional committees: In no way should they be accepted as arbiters to solve problems between us and the Balli Kombëtar; we settle these things ourselves, we are in our own country and it is we who

make the law here as the interests of our country, our people and our war require.

«We know who the Anglo-Americans are,» I stressed in the letter, «and never for a moment forget that they are capitalists, that they are against communism and socialism; they do not forget who we are, but neither do we forget who they are. At present we are in alliance with them against Italian fascism and German nazism, and we shall remain loyal to this alliance. However, we have not allowed and never will allow them to interfere in the internal affairs of Albania. The bitter past of our people is not to be repeated again. The Communist Party of Albania and the Albanian people will not allow this.»*

When their saw struck a nail, the British abandoned the direct approach and operated by stealth, trying to divide and deceive our people in devious ways.

McLean and his men strove to probe around the terrain, but made no headway anywhere.

One October day, when I was talking to Babë Myslim, a battalion commander came in flourishing a small purse.

«What's in it?» asked Myslim.

«Gold sovereigns,» he replied.

«Where did you find it?» I asked.

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* Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 1, pp. 435-436, Alb. ed.

«In a corner of my tent. It came on to rain and the British Major who was passing by came in for shelter. When the rain stopped he went away, but I found this which he left in the tent.»

«Look,» I said, «take the interpreter and go to the house where he is staying, give him back the money and say to him: 'Next time, Major, don't 'forget' your sovereigns in a partisan's tent, because it might have unpleasant consequences for you'»

«The rotters!» snorted Babë. «They've done this once before.»

«Yes, I remember,» I said.

We were in a village of the Peza zone. While Myslim, I and several other comrades were sitting around the fire in a poor peasant's home, a partisan came running up, panting hard from exertion.

«The British officer, who has just set out for Greca, has left this bag where his tent was pitched, Babë,» he said to Myslim.

«What's inside it? Let me have a look!» Myslim took the bag, opened it and poured out a number of sovereigns on the goatskin mat.

Myslim frowned, stood up and ordered the partisan curtly:

«Take these, go quickly, catch up with that dog and tell him: 'Don't plant money on the road. We don't swallow such things. The Albanian doesn't sell himself for money.'»

«Well said, Babë,» I said. «The British officer must be taught that true Albanians can't be bought for gold.»

This was not the first time that Myslim Peza had taken such a resolute, stern and wide-awake stand.

From the village of Greca, the British Major Seymour once sent a letter to Comrade Myslim Peza to whom he complained that no one would give him information, that no one would listen to his orders, or tell him of our plans to attack the Germans, etc. and, seeking to find out these plans from Myslim, he wrote craftily, «I have addressed this letter to you, because you are a military man, as I am, and I hope that you understand this difficult position better than the others who do not have that experience in war and other things.» And to whom did the British Major address his prayers? — To Babë Myslim, an outstanding patriot and valiant fighter of our people. Myslim replied with such a blast that the cunning fox of the Intelligence Service never dared return to this course.

Wherever they went, especially when they carried out «actions», when they blew up bridges or roads, they carelessly left behind them such things as cigarette packets, meat tins and so on, branded *Made in England,* so that the occupiers would understand that the authors were

British and pursue them, quite unconcerned that villages were burnt and reprisals carried out against the population in the zones where they operated. The culmination of their «actions» came in the middle of October 1943 when British and American aircraft bombed the «Tirana airfield». As our comrades from Tirana reported, they had bombed a whole section of the city, killing and wounding hundreds of residents and causing incalculable material damage. Immediately we learned of this, we sent a protest to the British military mission, which we concluded as follows: «Report this matter to Cairo so that our complaint is made known in the proper quarter, so that these unacceptable acts against the civilian population are not repeated but attacks are made with even greater severity against enemy military objectives.» In reply to this the British mission sent their friend, Mustafa Gjinishi, a leaflet written in English to translate, for duplication and distribution in Tirana. Among other things, it read, «Our airmen will take all possible care not to cause you accidental harm, but you, for your part, must assist them by not remaining near military objectives.» What logic!

This is the sort of contribution the British made with their «actions» in Albania!

In the first week of October 1943 Bill McLean had sought a meeting with me, giving

as his reason «a very urgent matter» which he had to communicate to me from his centre in London.

I deliberately kept him waiting two days to let him know that I was in no hurry to deal with this «very urgent matter» from London, just as London was in no hurry to fulfil our very urgent requests for arms and ammunition. The British and the chief of the British mission attached to us, Bill McLean, told us a whole string of lies. They made lots of promises, but their aircraft did not come «because of bad weather», because «Britain was supplying weapons to the whole of Europe», because «the people who were supposed to fulfil the requests of the National Liberation Front were none too careful,» and other such tales, which had become very stale. Up to that time the British had dropped us nothing, apart from a few hundred rifles, a very small quantity of ammunition, and some used clothing, just enough to be able to say, «You are not left without being sent something.» However, those few rifles that we received from them quickly turned into scrap-iron, because the ammunition for them ran out. As I said previously, the depots of the occupiers which we attacked, the battlefields and the disarming of prisoners were the sources of our arms.

We had frequent quarrels and confrontations

with the British. We demanded arms from them, they told us lies, and on rare occasions, after fights and squabbles, they gave us a few simple used automatics and sent one or two aircraft to drop us a little clothing.

We also quarrelled over the question of the BBC, which very rarely spoke about the war which was being waged against the occupier in our country, or when it did mention it, attributed it to the Balli Kombëtar. In this situation we tightened up our control over them and made it difficult for them to move about. Through great efforts they made contact with people sent in disguise by the heads of the Balli Kombëtar, in the districts of Korça, Tirana and Dibra. Of course they had special contact with Abaz Kupi (later Bill McLean was attached to him), and through him made contact, in secret from us, with the quislings in Tirana, with the chiefs of reaction in the North, especially in Dibra, and with Muharrem Bajraktari. The policy of the British was clear to us. They were organizing reaction against us, trying to get reaction to declare war on us and to strike a mortal blow at us, in collaboration with the Italians and, later, with the Germans, so that the British forces would intervene as «liberators» in the liberation of Albania and the new Ballist quislings would take power. However, things did not work out that way. The Party was stronger than the Ita-

lians, the Germans, the Ballists, the Zogites and the British.

For these reasons, the meetings which I had with the British from time to time began and ended with quarrels, began with our demands and ended with their false promises.

I was convinced that Bill McLean, who was seeking a meeting with me, had nothing to tell me apart from some other false promise.

I received him in a correct but cool manner. The British officer, on the contrary, was all smiles as he squeezed my hand. He laughed, his eyes gleamed like those of a fox; he was intelligent, but he had a black heart. This time the cat had hidden its claws and was purring sweetly. I had formed the opinion that when McLean, the agent of the Intelligence Service, smiled, I should be on my guard, because his smiles hid perfidious aims.

I asked Bill McLean to sit down and offered him my tin of tobacco to roll a cigarette, although I knew that he did not smoke, and never touched our raki. He was continually munching chocolate, which the aircraft dropped him along with his personal supplies. Perfidious Albion had aircraft for such things, but when it came to dropping weapons to us who were fighting fascism, aircraft were not available!

«You have asked to meet me, because you have a very urgent matter from London to com-

municate to me, Mr. McLean. Please tell me what you have to say, I am listening,» I said.

«Two days ago, Mr. Hoxha, I received an urgent telegram from London, but it was impossible for you to receive me quickly, because you are very busy and I understand this. I have some news, very pleasant both for you and for us,» he told me.

«Are the aircraft coming with the arms which we need so badly?» I asked him.

«No, Mr. Hoxha, even better news than that. A general is coming, together with his personal staff. When he has come,» said Bill McLean smiling, «undoubtedly all your requests will be fulfilled.»

I waited for him to continue.

«The general's name is Davies. He is an outstanding and capable soldier, who knows Albania well and loves it sincerely.»

And he went on and on in the same tone, boosting the general in order to convince me.

«His chief of staff is a colonel called Nicholls,» and he began to boost him, too. «I would like you, Mr. Hoxha, to issue the necessary orders to the partisan command of the region which is allocated for his landing, so that all the necessary measures are taken,» continued McLean.

When McLean finished, I had my say:

«Can you tell me to whom this general and his staff are being sent?»

«To you, Mr. Hoxha.»

«I understand that. But I want to know whether he is being sent to the General Staff of the National Liberation Army or to the National Liberation General Council?»

The wily McLean understood what I was driving at, thought for a moment and replied:

«To the General Staff of the Albanian partisans. That's why a general is being sent. He is a military personality, not a political one.»

«How difficult it is to separate military questions from political questions,» I said. «We do not separate them, but you have your own principles and regulations. I have a question for you.»

«Please ask it, Mr. Hoxha.»

«From whom is he sent to us?»

«From our centre.»

«Which is your centre?»

He was in a tight spot and had to think whether to say London or Cairo. After some moments he said:

«London.»

«That means to say from the War Office of the British Empire?» I asked again.

«Yes,» he admitted in a reluctant mumble.

«Now I have the matter clear and I am glad that you explained this to me,» I said, «because our links and collaboration with Britain, as an

ally in the common fight against the same enemies, are important to us.»

Bill McLean's face set in a frown at these words of mine. He had been obliged to admit things which he did not want to say. We were clear that the British did not want these links to be taken as official recognition by the government in London, but simply as military collaboration with the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters established in Cairo. That is precisely why I pressed him on this matter from the outset.

«Mr. McLean,» I said, «I have a complaint. Friendship and correctness between allies require that, before we decide the place where the general and his staff are to land and notify the partisan command in the zone to take the proper measures, your War Office should have sought the permission of the General Staff of our National Libration Army for the coming of this mission; you should first have sought our approval to see whether we agree that the group of the British officers with General Davies should come to our country and be attached to us. This, you will understand, is not a formal requirement, but an important matter of principle.»

The agent of the Intelligence Service thought for a moment, but, losing no time and smiling under his auburn moustache, he replied:

«Of course, you are quite right, Mr. Hoxha.

This is precisely what our War Office had in mind, but I was so overjoyed and excited that I made the mistake of not presenting the content of the message from London until the end,» and, unfolding a letter he was holding, he began to read what was allegedly a request for my approval.

«In that case everything is in order,» I told McLean. «As to the competences, rights and duties of General Davies and his staff, I assume I am to discuss these with him when he comes. If this is so (and McLean nodded his head in agreement), on what date will he come and where do you think he should land?»

McLean said that he would inform me of the precise date later.

«For the moment I am unable to inform you about the date, but as to the place for his landing, you decide that yourselves,» he continued. «You know your zones better than anyone else.»

«How many aircraft will come?» I asked.

«I cannot say, but possibly more than one.»

They brought us coffee, and while rolling a cigarette, I was thinking about a suitable safe place for them to land so that nothing untoward would happen, because we would bear responsibility.

After some consideration, I said to Bill McLean:

«He will land on the Biza Plateau.»

«Where is this plateau?» he asked, as if he did not know.

I opened the map which I had in my bag and pointed it out to him. After telling him that although the place was close to Tirana and Elbasan, it was secure, because the whole zone was liberated, there were partisan detachments everywhere and the whole population of the region was with us, I continued:

«You can assure your War Office that everything will go well.»

Whenever I mentioned the War Office I noticed that he was embarrassed and wrinkled his brow. It was obvious that he had made a mistake in admitting to me that their centre was the British War Office, and I continued to mention it to annoy him, just as he had annoyed us by deceiving us hour after hour about the supplies of weapons and ammunition.

«Do you agree about the place?» I asked.

«Yes,» replied McLean, «I shall inform the centre.»

«And I shall summon the local commander and commissar where the landing is to be made and tell them to take the appropriate measures. I shall tell them to make contact with you, but please go to Çermenika for some days to talk to them.»

This was the last meeting that I had with Major McLean as chief of the British mission.

When the general came to replace him, he went to London, and after being thoroughly briefed there, in April 1944 he was dropped into Albania again, where he linked up with Bazi i Canës. Through Bazi i Canës and reaction he became a secret friend of the Germans with whom he came to terms. McLean, the leader of this pack of wolves, came out in his true colours as our sworn enemy. I shall speak about his activity among this pack of wolves and about its leaders, headed by Abaz Kupi, in a separate chapter.

The British General's group was not going to sneak into Albania like a gang of thieves, as McLean's group had done. At least, the British were now obliged to inform us, to go more than half-way towards seeking our permission to enter Albania, but they still made every effort to avoid giving the slightest sign that they might officially recognize our National Liberation War. Of course, they had their predetermined plans and came to us to learn our plans, to hinder the realization of them and to create the impression that they were the main factors in our National Liberation War and that our war and victory depended on them. Guided by such aims, they tried to prepare a terrain favourable to their intrigues.

Naturally, we hindered them in these diabolical aims.

After McLean left, I summoned Kadri Hoxha, commander of the Partisan Group Headquarters of Elbasan, and talked with him personally and at length to make absolutely sure that he understood everything clearly. I informed him about the fact that Brigadier General Davies, whom he called simply «Brigadier Davies», was to be landed at Biza.

The commander of the partisan group knew English, because he had attended the American Technical School in Tirana. Therefore, I said to him, with a laugh:

«You call Davies 'brigadier', but when the British eventually learn that among us the word 'brigadier' means an N.C.O., they won't like this title and will ask you to call him general.»

Kadri, with that sardonic smile of his, said to me with a wink: «Don't worry, I know that.»

Nevertheless, I advised him to behave correctly with the General, to talk to him in friendly fashion, without telling him anything concrete about our partisan forces in the region, our detachments, our bases for assembly and supplies, in other words, I advised Kadri to tell him nothing which constituted military secrets. I instructed him to talk to the General about our war against the occupiers, about the treachery of the

Balli Kombëtar and its collaboration with the enemy forces, about the trust the National Liberation Front had placed in the great Soviet-British-American alliance, and to keep on telling him that we needed weapons, which they were not sending us, and so on.

«I understand you, 'my dear friend',» he replied (it was his custom to use this expression). «I shall do just what you say.»

«You should let him talk and not say too much yourself. If the General does not talk, stir him up a bit so that he does.» I gave him these instructions although I was sure that the British were skilled in dealing with the tactic I recommended. But my concern was to ensure that our people gave away the minimum and gathered the maximum.

I told him that when the General came he was to convey to him my welcome and best wishes and instructed him to fulfil the needs the General might have, but with a correct indifference, so that our guest would not get the idea that we were his servants, but allies in the war. As soon as the General landed, he should learn that our traditional hospitality inspires the generosity of the host among the Albanians.

«He will need some people to serve him, a cook and someone to supply him with vegetables, but, first of all,» I instructed, «he must be found

somewhere to stay. All this must be paid for in hard cash. It's wartime, they have money and our people are poor.»

«I understand, 'my dear friend',» was Kadri Hoxha's refrain.

«Later, we shall examine his attitude towards our war, towards the policy of the National Liberation Front and towards the Ballists and reaction,» I said, «and depending on this stand, we shall define our conduct towards him.

«All the people who are to associate with him must be sound, intelligent, prudent, close-mouthed, and a hundred per cent loyal to our cause,» I instructed the commander.

«I have everything clear, 'my dear friend'.»

«Where do you think we might billet the British General for the time being?» I asked Kadri Hoxha, pretending that I could not guess the place he would name.

«In Orenja, 'my dear friend',» he replied with a wink of his eye, smiling his sardonic smile and stroking his dapper moustache. «The General will be nicely caged up there.»

«I agree,» I said. «Establish him in Orenja with your friend Beg Balla. They tell me that the General is getting on in years. Since Beg is elderly, too, it might please him to talk to the General, but mind you don't let Beg gossip with him much.»

The group commander smiled.

«I was only pulling your leg, as he is your friend,» I said. «Because Beg Balla is a sympathizer of the National Liberation War.

«First of all,» I continued, «we must provide the General with a liaison officer, one of our comrades who knows English well, who will remain with him continuously and act as the link between him and his staff and the National Liberation General Council and the General Staff of the National Liberation Army. I thought of Comrade Frederik Nosi.»

«Your idea is a good one,» he replied.

Frederik Nosi came from the same family as Lef Nosi, a person who had influence within Elbasan and all over the district, especially in Shpat. Lef was notorious as a cunning bourgeois intellectual opposed to the people; he had been against the peasant uprising of Haxhi Qamili. In the time of Zog he continued to enrich himself. He was respected by the regime as a person with tendencies opposed to Vërlaci. Later he became a prominent figure in the Balli Kombëtar against our Party and the National Liberation Front. Consistent in his treachery, Lef Nosi went so far as to collaborate with the Germans also, but we captured him and tried him for his crimes. During the Zog regime Lef Nosi must have been an agent of the Intelligence Service, because he lived and collaborated with an Eng-

lish woman, Mrs. Hasluck, who lived for some time in Elbasan where she occupied a house and had become his mistress. She was allegedly engaged in anthropological research, in collecting flowers, butterflies and folklore, but in fact, as was proved later, she was working for the British Secret Service. Mrs. Hasluck remained in Elbasan until the occupation of Albania in 1939 by fascist Italy. After leaving Albania, this long-time agent of the British Intelligence Service turned up in Cairo and served as instructor there for the British missions that were sent to Albania during the National Liberation War.

Frederik was a patriotic intellectual, who had done his primary schooling in Elbasan and went on to Robert College in Istanbul, where the lessons were given in the English language which he mastered well. Later he graduated for law in Italy and, on the eve of the occupation of Albania by fascist Italy, was appointed a judge.

Frederik hated Lef, was opposed to him. He was a progressive man with revolutionary views, wanted to become a communist and joined the «Zjarri» Group. When this group was exposed and demolished by the Party, Frederik was one of those honest comrades who abandoned the group, joined the Party and fought and still fights loyally within its ranks, without ever wavering.

I remember that after I had written in the newspaper *Zëri i popullit,* the article, *A Few Words about Some Lackeys of Fascism: the «Zjarri» Group,* the essence of which was: open fire against the «Zjarri» Group, and the group had been completely smashed, when I was on my way back from Korça to Labinot, at Polis, in the home of Myftar Hoxha I met a young man carrying a satchel.

«Who are you?» I asked him.

«Frederik Nosi,» he replied. «I've joined the partisans and have been admitted to the Party, too,» and he told me about his activity.

I had heard the name of Frederik Nosi. because we had it in the list of names of the members of the «Zjarri» Group. But I formed a good impression of him from the time I first met him in Myftar's house and I was not mistaken.

This, in a few words, was Frederik Nosi whom I was to appoint as the liaison officer attached to General Davies.

I knew Frederik's record and was convinced that he was loyal to the Party. I thought that when this person was proposed to General Davies as liaison officer, the General would be «in the seventh heaven», and, while keeping his face as impassive as Buddha, would think, «What an unsuspected blessing! The nephew of Lef Nosi, Mrs. Hasluck's acquaintance, is to be with me?!» Later, when I proposed Frederik to the General,

he was unable to hide his delight. But he was wrong. Frederik Nosi was not and never became his man.

I summoned Frederik, told him of the mission with which we were charging him, defined his duties, spoke about the importance of the job, its dangers and the benefits we would have from it, and asked him whether he agreed to accept the task.

«I fully agree,» he said, «I am a soldier of the Party and will go wherever it sends me. I will do my duty honourably.» And he did, too, honourably, as a patriot and a loyal son of the Party.

Right from the start I was convinced that the coming of this British mission, headed by a general, to Albania would not bring any notable benefit to our National Liberation War. The General would certainly follow the same strategy and tactics towards us as his predecessors, that is, he would assist us with a few weapons, a little ammunition and clothing, the minimum to justify his coming and staying here, would give us a few hundred sovereigns, in order to say, «Try to buy weapons from the occupation soldiers on the black market,» etc. As we had understood from what they attempted to do secretly, the real task of the British military missions was to gather

information about the situation, organization, size and changes in the enemy forces, as well as about the situation, organization, activities and numbers of our partisan forces, and about the strategy and tactics of our leadership in the war. Their task was to acquaint themselves with the situation, strength, and influence of the Balli Kombëtar and other reactionary groups which were operating in our country, and on the basis of this information, to build up their strategy and tactics for intervention in Albania.

What conclusions had I reached in regard to the activity of the British? Regardless of the fact that they were fighting against fascist Italy and Hitlerite Germany, regardless of the fact that they were allied with us who were fighting the same enemy, they wanted to weaken our National Liberation War, to weaken and, if possible, eliminate the influence of our Party, to recruit agents and spies in the ranks of the Front, and especially in the ranks of the communists, in order to weaken and destroy us, to create groups and factions, and thus prepare a terrain in which the British officers would make the law in the ranks of our detachments and turn them into «commandos» to carry out sabotage actions and gather information in the interests of the British Empire and to the detriment of the independence of our country.

Their plan was to get to know, to meet and link up with the supporters of Zog, the heads of the Balli Kombëtar, with the bajraktars and quislings, and together with them, to create a military-political force in Albania opposed to the Communist Party and the National Liberation Front. They wanted to have this force, which they would lead politically and militarily, ready to engage in direct fighting against us during the National Liberation War and especially on the eve of Liberation, in order to seize power from our hands, or at least, to force us to share power with them.

It was the sacred duty of the Party and of me personally, as its General Secretary and responsible for the partisan armed forces, to block, paralyze and destroy these diabolical plans of the British. We were to carry out this sacred duty with complete success. With its heroic struggle and revolutionary vigilance, the Party saved the people and the Homeland from falling into many dangerous traps which the British pseudo-allies were secretly preparing. The British imperialists were unable to achieve any of their objectives.

Precisely for these reasons, the coming of General Davies and his group put us on the alert. He was not being sent here for nothing. Without doubt his centre considered that the «conditions were ripe» for further actions. What were these actions? It was our duty to discover them.

His centre was certainly sending this General to co-ordinate the activity of the British missions here better, or to try to extend and increase their number for new tasks in new situations. Hence, it was our duty to discover these aims, too.

Our National Liberation War had assumed major proportions and was gathering strength. Our partisan çetas, detachments, and battalions were dealing heavy blows to the Italian fascists in our country. The National Liberation Front had become a reality, a broad, powerful, political organization which was extending day by day and getting the people into the fight against the occupiers. The quislings were being exposed and replaced one after the other. The Balli Kombëtar was coming out in its true colours, because it did not fight the enemy, but collaborated with it and the quislings, and in fact, it fought us with arms and with propaganda. All the bajraktars of the North were with the occupiers and in open armed struggle against the Communist Party and the people. For fascist Italy the end had come, while Hitlerite Germany was receiving heavy blows and suffering one defeat after another.

Precisely in this situation this British General landed in Albania. Without doubt he came to fish in troubled waters.

For all these reasons, along with the measures to receive him in the zone of Elbasan, I im-

mediately took other political, organizational and security measures. I summoned to Peza the Political Secretary of the Regional Committee of the CPA for Tirana, Gogo Nushi, whom, after informing him of developments, I instructed to organize and set in motion our information service in the direction of pro-British «democratic» circles, or leaders of the Balli Kombëtar, to find out whether they, too, had been informed about the coming of this mission headed by a general, and why it was coming. I instructed him to inform me as quickly as possible about everything they might learn, directly or indirectly.

Likewise, I notified Comrade Haxhi Lleshi to keep his ears open and set people in motion to gather information on these matters by penetrating into the circle of the bajraktars of Dibra.

I sent a courier to Baba Faja and informed him that, apart from the above task, after the General landed, he with his men must keep watch on all the roads and paths of Martanesh and not allow any dubious character to enter Biza and contact the British. I also informed the communist comrades in Shëngjergj about the same thing, and instructed them to watch the movements of the Ballists, the Memaj family and company.

I had a long, specially detailed talk with Mustafa Kaçaçi, commissar of the partisan çeta

of Mat, whom I instructed to pay attention to anything he might hear and to movements of the Zogites in Mat, especially those around Bazi i Canës.

Before General Davies landed in our country, I received two pieces of information, one from Mat and one from Shëngjergj. The information from Mat was that at a feast the bajraktar Bilal Kola had said: «His Majesty King Zog I is working for Albania, he is thinking about us, and is going to send somebody important here soon.»

The information from Shëngjergj related that some chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar in Shëmri village had said: «The Englishman is going to help us because he is with us and not with the communists.»

It was possible that the British secret service had informed its people here. This was to be verified later.

Thus, the phase of preparing for the arrival in Albania of the group led by the British General Davies, during the National Liberation War, came to an end.

III

THE COMING AND THE INGLORIOUS END OF GENERAL DAVIES

Biza — the residence of the British General. Why? The old refrain — promises. Two hours of fruitless talk. «Not Zog but the Zogites»! «They have deceived you about the 'battles' of the Balli Kombëtar, General.» «I want to show the Balli Kombëtar the way». The *smog* **— the games of the BBC. The five true reasons for his coming. Dinner with the Englishman. His meetings with the heads of the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites. Attempts to cross to the South. The crest-fallen General. «Who has lost the war? Who should surrender, we? Never. You, General, are a defeatist, a capitulationist.» The end: the General surrenders.**

One moonlight night General Davies and his team landed without incident on the Biza Plateau. As was reported to me, as soon as he landed,

he had boasted to our comrades: «I am the first British General to land in Albania by parachute». On the following day, together with his chief of staff Colonel Nicholls he had gone hunting but was disappointed because he had killed nothing. «So, General,» I said to myself, «while our people are being killed, you go hunting!» Those days he ordered them to find him a dog and very quickly a bulldog, which he named «Biza», was brought from Tirana, or somewhere. Later an aircraft from Cairo dropped him a beautiful collar for the dog and it used to please and amuse the General to see the dog catch the peasants by their baggy trousers, when he took it for a walk. It couldn't be helped — this was how the General had been brought up and he was incapable of breaking away from his bourgeois world. They informed me from Elbasan also that the Englishman had preferred to establish himself on the Biza Plateau and not at Orenja, as our comrades proposed. He had asked whether this matter could possibly be examined later.

As instructed, our comrades had given him every assistance to erect huts and tents and to fulfil his other needs for people to help him, transport animals and food. All the expenditure was charged to the Englishman's account.

The General's desire to remain at the Biza Plateau, which is exposed to the wind and the snow, I thought, was inspired neither by love

of nature and the forest, nor by romantic feelings, because certainly this General was no Byron or Shelley. Other aims must have impelled him to stay at Biza. Without doubt McLean had been lying when he pretended not to know where the Biza Plateau was.

Assuredly he preferred the Biza Plateau for his residence because of its strategic position. There the British aircraft could drop materials for the team at any time. On the other hand, this place, which was in our liberated zones, was suitable for the General's purposes, because it was close to Tirana, close to Shëngjergj and Shëmri, where the Ballists had their lairs, and because, regardless of the fact that the Englishman pretended to be attached to us, he could communicate more easily with the zones of the North, and especially with Mat and Dibra.

From this it could be deduced that the General had the task to. link up with the British missions already in our country, or those whose coming he might request later, and through them to make contact and collaborate with the traitors, the quislings, with the Zogite reaction and the bajraktars of the North, who had sold themselves to the occupiers. Therefore, I warned the comrades to keep a vigilant watch around Biza, to identify those whom the British met and to make the General understand clearly that, since he was to stay with the General Staff of the

National Liberation Army and in the zones liberated by the partisans, he must not move from Biza without having made official contact with the delegates of the Staff.

Later the comrades informed me that he had agreed to receive the delegates of our Staff and had also asked to meet me, and that for the time being he was concerned with organizing the work to establish his quarters and his stables, and supplies of meat and vegetables.

«He's a glutton,» our commander of the zone informed me, «while as for dropping arms to us, he's continuing the old refrain of the other British officers: promises!»

Very well then, let the General eat and drink, let him cool himself in the springs and the breezes of Biza. I would notify him to come to meet me when it suited me, on my way to Labinot. Since he, too, had only promises, we did not worry about keeping him waiting, because we had plenty of other problems on our hands. We had no time to waste on empty words when the war with the enemies and the traitors was raging fiercely.

When I finished my work in Peza I went on to the Elbasan region to make contact with the organization of the Party there, with the leading comrades and the battalions and çetas of that region. We had to further enliven the organization of the Party, to extend it to many villages, where

the conditions were becoming more favourable day by day for the extension of the work of the Party. In such districts of Elbasan as Dumre, Çermenika and Polis we had good bases which had to be extended into Librazhd, Shpat and elsewhere. The party organization in the city had to play an even greater revolutionary role in mobilizing the people, and especially in activating the youth who were swift-acting and militant. I had planned to enter the city myself several times to meet a number of patriots personally in order to get them into action and link them more firmly with the Party and the war, as well as to hold some meetings with the leaders of the youth in the city and possibly also with groups of boys and girls.

As is known, the centre from which we organized contacts with Elbasan and the other cities most quickly and readily was Labinot. When we were threatened by some enemy attack we withdrew deeper into the mountains to the region of Shmil.

I had planned to meet General Davies in Labinot, too. I thought I should hold this meeting with him not only as the leader of the National Liberation War, but also on behalf of the Antifascist National Liberation Front, therefore. I took with me Dr. Nishani, Sejfulla Malëshova, Spiro Moisiu, Kostandin Boshnjaku, Nako Spiru, Spiro Koleka, and Mustafa Gjinishi. The latter was also to serve as interpreter. He was happy

that I took him with me and showed this, but even if he had tried to hide it, I had sensed that he was a keen supporter of the British. On this occasion I would have the possibility to observe Mustafa's reaction towards the British more carefully.

General Davies came to the meeting in the afternoon of October 31, right on time. He was accompanied by his chief of staff, Colonel Nicholls. I shook hands with him and asked:

«How are you? How do you feel in Albania?» I said this in English, because, when I was in the Lyceum I had learned a little English as a foreign language with Baba Loni.

The General smiled and said to me:

«I didn't know you spoke English, you speak it...»

«Your information is correct, I don't speak English,» I interrupted him, «but these are a few words I remember from my secondary school days. I speak French. We can speak in the language of Voltaire if you know it.»

He replied with a laugh:

«I have read Voltaire but I don't know the language.»

Davies was a middle-aged man, a bit portly, with a round face and a bulbous red nose (apparently he liked his whisky). His eyes were not as hard and cunning as McLean's. He laughed

frequently and knew how to conceal his thoughts and feelings. The most hard-worked word of his vocabulary was «I». He was wearing battledress with gaiters and heavy tan winter boots. He had on a thick khaki field jacket like those they had dropped us for the partisans. On his head he wore a black beret with an R A F badge and there were two or three medal ribbons on his jacket. He was carrying a stick, a real walking stick and not one of those fancy batons British officers like to carry. As to his age, he must have been well on in his fifties.

«Brigadier Davies», I said, «you are the honoured representative of one of our allies, Britain, in the war against the Italian fascists and the German nazis, and I am eager to hear what you have to say to us.»

«First of all,» began the General, «I want to pay homage to the fight of the Albanian patriots who have voluntarily sacrificed their comfort, their property and their lives for their cause. The Allied Powers consider the Albanian movement, along with the movements of other peoples, of great importance, especially in the Balkans.»

Then, assuming a grave pose, as if to say, «Look with whom you have to do», he continued in a pompous tone:

«I am happy that I was chosen to head the

allied mission... I was chosen on the basis of my past as a soldier. (What irony! He might as well have said for merits in suppressing the liberation movement against the British colonial yoke in Mesopotamia and Palestine.) In London and in Cairo I have had discussions with senior officers and leading statesmen. Churchill himself would have met me when I was preparing to leave for here, had he not been at the Quebec Conference in Canada. In Cairo, Mr. Casey, minister of state for the Middle East, and commander-in-chief, Wilson, had meetings with me. At this time, Mr. Eden, Mr. Hull and Mr. Molotov are meeting in Moscow just like you and I here...»

In order to cut short this arrogant prattle, I interrupted:

«We are eager and willing to hear what your concrete tasks are and what your purpose in coming to our country is. We would like to hear from you, as an authorized senior officer, about the war situation in other countries, about the ratio of forces between our common enemies and our great allies. Everything that you may tell us will interest us, because it will inform us about the situation of the anti-fascist war and international policy. We are waging a common war against the same enemy, therefore, I assure you that we shall speak sincerely and openly just as we wish you to do. We must assist one another

in this great war to defeat fascism, both in the military field and in the political field.»

«I'm a soldier and not a politician,» said Davies. «Indeed, I must say that I'm not involved in politics at all, because as you know, Mr. Hoxha, our army is apolitical.»

«I've heard this from your colleague also,» I said, «but it would be better to say that you try 'to keep the soldier outside polities', or more correctly, to ensure that he unquestioningly carries out the policy of his officers, who are not apolitical, but loyally follow the policy of their government. Excuse me, I don't mean to offend you,» I said to Davies, «but what you said cannot be true anyway, because military questions cannot be separated from political questions. As a soldier, you must know the famous statement of Clausewitz of Prussia on this problem, because he was a soldier, too: 'War is the continuation of politics with other means'. In any case, during our talks and our collaboration together you will see for yourself that politics are linked very closely with the war. Willy-nilly, you yourself will be involved in politics. It cannot be otherwise.»

General Davies smiled as he continued:

«You communists mix these two questions together. Of course, that is your business, but we British do not do this, because otherwise we would be accused of interfering in the internal

affairs of others, while we do not want to interfere.»

«This statement pleases me,» I said. «Apparently the British Empire has changed its policy and this is as it should be, because now the peoples are awakening and the era of interference in the internal affairs of others is almost over. Nevertheless,» I continued without entering into academic discussion, «I'm pleased to note that General Davies and all the other British officers subordinate to him will not interfere in our internal affairs.»

I begged his pardon for interrupting and General Davies continued:

«We are waging a joint war, because we have the same enemy. The enemy is very strong and, as you know, has invaded the territories of Russia, has occupied France and the whole continent. Hitler was unable to occupy our country and now we are fighting on the seas and oceans and in the air and assisting all the peoples of the world who are fighting nazism, with all our strength. We also have America, which is a great military, political and economic power, as an ally. Without its aid, it would be difficult to win the war.»

And the British General continued in this strain for some twenty minutes. Then he got on to the main theme:

«I have been sent to you so that, within our possibilities, I can assist the war of the Albanian

people who are our allies, and for whom we have always had feelings of good will. I shall lead all the groups of officers of the British missions in your country and they will take orders from me. I'm sure that I will have the support of the Partisan Command which you lead, and will be assisted to acquaint myself with the situation in the country, so that I can inform my superiors who want more complete knowledge of the situation here in order to be able to organize and co-ordinate aid for the Albanian fighters.

«I want to make it clear to you and I tell you frankly. Mr. Hoxha,» continued the General, «that both in Cairo and London there's confusion about the question of Albania. There they are not really certain whether the war is being fought, how it is being fought and who is fighting in Albania. In London they say that the Zogites are fighting the war, some say that there is an organization of nationalist patriots called the Balli Kombëtar, while others say that those who are fighting are communists, the partisans that you lead. I believe that one of the causes for this confusion is that our missions here are few, and thus, for one reason or another, they have not had the possibility to acquaint themselves properly with the situation.

«The reason that they have sent me here to the Partisan Command, Mr. Hoxha,» continued

this agent of the British Intelligence Service, General Davies with the RAF badge on his beret, «is to clear away the *smog* in London and send a ray of sunshine there from Albania.»

«You're speaking like Shelley, Brigadier,» I said. «It seems to me that your inspiration and the poetic phrases that you use have their source in the heavens, since you are an RAF officer.»

«Oh, no, Mr. Hoxha,» he said, «this is just an honorary RAF badge which they gave me because I am a paratrooper.»

«Carry on,» I thought to myself, «I know none of what you're telling me is true.»

Brigadier Davies continued:

«While looking at matters from the angle of the partisan war, since I have been sent to you for this purpose, I would like, with your permission, to make contact also with the other anti-fascist currents which are fighting against the occupiers, for example, with the Balli Kombëtar, the Zogites or any other current, if such exists. You must understand that I shall do this,» continued the General, «in the interests of our common fight, but also in the interest of Albania itself. In this undertaking, I am guided by no interests other than those of the war against nazi Germany. That is all I have to say, Mr. Hoxha,» concluded General Davies with a smile.

«I have listened to you with attention, General», I said. «Now please listen to me. I shall

speak at somewhat greater length, regardless of the fact that I am the representative of a small people. Our people, small in numbers, have fought during their whole existence. Your people have fought, too, but the wars of our two peoples have been of different characters. Our country has been invaded many times, but we have always fought the enemies, we have driven them out and we have never mixed our blood with them.

«The Albanian people have an ancient history. They are among the most ancient peoples of the Balkans and, although small in numbers, at every period they have displayed their vitality by resisting attempts to wipe them out, at all costs, and have matched their strength in war with many savage enemies who have been unable to overcome their sentiments for freedom. The Ottoman feudal-military regime prevailed for 500 years on end. The invaders brought death and destruction, tried to drown the Albanians in blood, but they never yielded. The Albanian people preserved their language, their culture and their brilliant ancient traditions. Their whole history has been written in blood and they are shedding their blood today to win their freedom. Thanks to bloody wars, thanks to the rifle and the pen, in 1912 independence was proclaimed in Vlora, where the patriot Ismail Qemali raised the national flag, the flag of our National Hero —

Skanderbeg, who in the 15th century fought for 25 years on end against the Ottoman invaders.

«But even after this, little Albania became a battlefield and an object of the predatory aims of the Great Powers and their satellites. Nevertheless, our people withstood these aims and intrigues. In the War of Vlora of 1920 they drove the Italian occupiers into the sea.»

I went on to speak about the regime of Zog and how the external and internal enemies of the Albanian people brought him to power.

«Under his regime the country was utterly ruined,» I continued. «Its independence existed only on paper and the people suffered every sort of hardship. Albania was completely dependent politically and economically on the Great Powers, which used it as a token for barter. There were very few schools, 85 per cent of the population was illiterate. The internal policy of the despot Zog was a policy of suppression of human rights, a policy of corruption, of the club and the noose, against any ordinary patriotic person, against anything new and progressive. Agriculture was completely neglected, and the peasants were exploited to the bone by most ferocious mediaeval methods. Hunger, disease and ignorance prevailed everywhere. Such industry as there was, was quite negligible — only a few workshops, where the workers toiled to exhaustion for very little pay. Our country was left without one metre of railway.

«There was great unemployment and the Albanians were compelled to take the road of emigration to Egypt, the USA, Argentina and Australia, and in spite of that, they had 'only an empty purse', as Çajup, the poet of our National Renaissance, wrote. Under the regime of Zog the Italian fascists became masters of the country. Our underground wealth was exploited by them, too.

«Fascist Italy, with the support of the local gentry, brought in Italian settlers and drove the peasants from their land. Through a policy of dumping, it swamped the Albanian market and absorbed all our raw materials. This regime opened the doors to the occupation. Zog did not allow the people to fight, sabotaged the army, stole the gold — the blood and sweat of the Albanian people, abandoned the country and today is living in luxury with his wife, his son and his servants in London. The sufferings of this war were added to those the people were already experiencing.

«However, as you have heard and will see with your own eyes now that you are here, the Albanian people rose against the invaders, as has always been their custom, and are fighting self-sacrificingly besides the great allies. They are determined and confident that, just as they defeated Italian fascism, they will strike a mortal blow at

the Hitlerite army and win their freedom. They are convinced that, together with this, they will do away with internal exploitation and oppression. A happy future awaits them. All the wealth above and below the ground will be in the hands of the people. Do you see these forests? There will come a day when they will be exploited to build factories, blocks of flats, schools and hospitals and will provide sleepers for our railways, there will come a time when resorts, where the working people will pass their holidays, will be established here and in other places with crystal springs...

«Foreigners have occupied your country, too. Wars have been waged there, too. Who hasn't invaded your island: the Celts, the Romans, the Vikings, the so-called 'Northmen', and others but the kings and queens of England, the upper strata of the country, have accepted the occupiers and made peace with them, have coexisted and intermarried with them, have adopted the foreigners' way of life and even taken over the expansionist policy of Roman emperors and others.

«Dialectically, however, the old dies out and the new triumphs, hence, with the passage of time, old, anti-popular ideas are rejected and in place of them new ideas are born and their correctness is confirmed by time and science.

«The history of the existence and work of

my people is not like that of the Phoenix, because, although after each occupation it seemed from the outside that everything had been lost and any hope of freedom had been extinguished, they were never turned to ashes. The Albanian was an eagle and remained an eagle through the centuries.

«You said, General, that Britain has always wished Albania well. Friends speak frankly and I regret to tell you that I cannot agree with you on this question. I don't want to go into a long history, but everyone knows that during the First World War and at the Treaty of Versailles Britain considered Albania a savage country and a token for barter, allotting a piece to Italy, a piece to Greece and a piece to Yugoslavia. Albania and the Albanian people, who fought for existence on their own land, were sold off through open and secret treaties. But why go so far back? When fascist Italy attacked us, your prime minister, Chamberlain, did not lift a finger to help us, he was too busy with his fishing rod. But could it be imagined that Chamberlain, who sold out Czechoslovakia and Austria, who signed the Munich Agreement and endangered the British Isles themselves, would not sell out Albania? This is what happened. Of course, our opinion of the British people is different from that of their rulers.

«We have respect for the British people who

are fighting courageously beside the glorious peoples of the Soviet Union, and making an outstanding contribution to the defeat of Hitlerite Germany. The British people are our allies. We have a high opinion of the war they are waging. Of all the major states of Western Europe, Britain is the only one which resisted Hitler valianty and with great sacrifice. Britain did not yield. It knew how to retreat and also how to attack. This fact we have never denied. Winston Churchill, who leads the war of your people, which saved the British Isles, is not like Chamberlain. But in our opinion, the war is very complex and very difficult.

«Politics cannot be separated from the war, General. A wrong and treacherous policy led France to catastrophe. We cannot consider the policy of the United States of America at that period good, because when France had been brought to its knees by nazi Germany and your islands were threatened, the American embassy remained in Vichy, accredited to the French traitor, Marshall Petain.

«Now that we are fighting together on one front against the one savage enemy, we shall smash it, because we are more powerful. You made passing reference to the war of the Soviet Union. I wish to stress that the Soviet Union is waging a heroic war and its Red Army is invincible. To lose one or even five battles does not mean that

you have lost the war. Bonaparte won every battle but it was the Russian people who brought him down from his high horse. Nazism will be smashed and destroyed by the Soviet Union and all of us — the peoples who are fighting and are its allies.

«I must stress, General, that it is good that you are going to clear away the *smog* about the Albanian question which has apparently shrouded London. This will depend on the reports you make. Regardless of this, however, I can assure you that events in our country will develop according to the will of the Albanian people, who this time are going to decide their own future by means of the rifle. I cannot agree with what you said, General,» I continued, «that Major McLean and the other British officers, who have been in our country, have been unable to learn the true situation, have not understood how the anti-fascist war is developing here, who is fighting and who is not fighting, who fought against us in collaboration with the Italian fascists, who are attacking us side by side with the German nazis and who are those others who are preparing to attack us together with the Germans. On many occasions we have made these matters clear to Major McLean and other British officers and moreover, at his request, we allowed Major McLean to go to urge some Ballist çetas in Korça to unite with us in fighting against

the enemy, and they not only did not want to do this, but even went so far as to attack our forces. This is my answer to your statement that the British missions here 'may not have been properly informed.' The truth is that they have not reported the real situation accurately, because this has been their predisposition. Now we are happy that you will deal with this question properly.»

General Davies bowed and said, *«Thank you!»*

«General,» I continued, «you spoke of the Zogites and said that they are fighting! Such a thing has never been true, either now or in the past. As I said earlier, the Zogites headed by Zog have oppressed the Albanian people for years on end, have murdered and sucked the blood of our people. Zog was a murderer, a hangman, a thief, an adventurer and traitor who linked up with Italy against our people, who sold the country to Italy and prepared the occupation of Albania. I repeat: At the tragic moment the traitor King stole the people's gold and ran for shelter to your country. This cruel feudal lord, agent of Austria-Hungary, agent of the Serbs and Wrangel's white Russians, agent of Mussolini, and executioner of the Albanian people, pretends to be King of the Albanians! Zog and his obedient hound, Abaz Kupi, constitute a filthy 'dynasty'. How ludicrous is the position of those

abroad who support Zog and think that they will use him as a trump card in the game they want to play to the detriment of the Albanian people! Ahmet Zog is a card that will never again have any value, General. In our country the very stones of the road see Zog as an enemy, let alone the Albanians who will tear him to bits if they catch him. I find it regrettable, General, that you even mentioned the name of this bandit.»

«Excuse me, Mr. Hoxha,» interrupted the General, «I did not speak about Zog, but about the Zogites.»

«General,» I replied, «if you speak of the Zogites, you are speaking of Zog, too. It is a mistake to think that the Zogites are fighting. They have never fought the occupiers and do not want to fight them. The National Liberation Front has appealed to them to rise in the war, and moreover their chief, to whom one of your missions is attached, and who took part in the Conference of Peza and was elected to the General Staff, not only did not fire a single shot against the occupiers even 'by accident', but withdrew from the Front and is organizing the reactionary forces to fight us.

«Brigadier Davies,» I continued, «the time has come for the representatives of the big capitalist states to change their opinion and stand

towards other peoples, especially towards the small peoples. They must accept that the peoples can no longer tolerate oppression and exploitation by the capitalist colonial forces and do their bidding, in a word, obey the orders and desires of those forces and wait for a Lord Beaconsfield, a Bismarck, a Lloyd George, a Clemenceau, a Sonnino, a Chamberlain or a Daladier to determine their fate. No, this will never occur again. Any illusion should be dispelled that the Great Powers will ever again appoint a Prince Wied or an Ahmet Zog as ruler of Albania and that the Albanian people will fall on their knees and say: 'So be it'. Anyone who knows the history of the wars of the Albanian people through the centuries is convinced that our forebears have never bowed in submission. And we, their descendants, will not bow, either. Excuse me for referring to the past, but I am obliged to do so. I do this not because you do not know history, but, since you have come to our country for the first time, it is my duty to speak frankly to you, as the representative of an allied country, in order to dispel the illusions which you might have formed from reading the books or reports of British authors of earlier or more recent times. One of these 'authors' is Mrs. Hasluck, the mistress of a leading spokesman for the Balli Kombëtar, Lef Nosi, a woman who travelled all over Albania in the time of Zog 'in order to acquaint

herself' with the country and gathered 'flowers and butterflies' for the collections, while now she delivers 'lectures' to officers of the British missions before they come to Albania. You, General, are free to think what you like, to have and stick to your own views, but we have the right to have ours, too; we are in our own country. You are our friends and our allies in the war against the German nazis and it is our joint anti-fascist war which brings us together.»

«It is precisely this war that unites us, therefore, we must collaborate,» said General Davies.

«In that case,» I said, «allow me, General, to give you a brief summary of our National Liberation War and its aims.» I went on to give him a vivid description of the war which our çetas. battalions and brigades were waging all over the country against the army of the German occupiers. I told him the history of the fierce battles against the Italians and the quisling governments in the service of the enemy, about the innumerable intrigues, the open and secret agreements of the nationalist heads of both the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites with the Viceroy, with General Dalmazzo, and their collaboration with the occupiers in armed struggle against us. I told the British General, who looked as if this was making some impression on him and as if he were hearing these things for the first time, about

the correct policy of our Anti-fascist National Liberation Front and its appeal to all honest Albanians to unite and fight in this common Front, without distinction as to class, religion, political convictions and ideas.

«In regard to the Balli Kombëtar as an organization of nationalists, you have been misinformed, General,» I told him. «They did not have an organization, but created it later as reaction against the National Liberation Front. From the program which it proclaimed, as well as the name Balli Kombëtar which it assumed, it is implied that this 'organization' is a union of many political shades, but there was no reason for this to be created, at a time when our people had their own leadership and were fighting to liberate themselves. Both its name and its 'Decalogue' came from the offices of the Viceroy and the quisling traitors. Neither the program nor the name of this 'organization' frighten the occupiers. Moreover, the name Balli Kombëtar means nothing, because the quislings, the executioners and the spies can take part in that 'organization' whenever they like.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» said the General, «the Balli Kombëtar might be reaction against the Communist Party which you lead, but not against the National Liberation Front.»

«It is reaction against both, General,» I replied, «against both the Communist Party of

Albania and the National Liberation Front, which are fighting together against the occupiers. The Balli Kombëtar is against those who fight the enemy and for those who do not fight it. What I say is proved in practice with concrete facts. The Balli Kombëtar has not fired a shot against the occupiers, but has fired on us. The National Liberation Front called on the Balli Kombëtar to fight against the occupiers even as a separate body, because the war would unite us regardless of the fact that the Balli Kombëtar was not in agreement with us. However, the Ballists still did not agree to fight, because they were linked with the enemy hand and foot. To make this more clear to you, General, it is as though you British were to say that you do not agree to take part in the anti-fascist front and fight nazi Germany because the Soviet Union, which is communist, is in this anti-fascist front! Hence, it is just as if you were to reason this way: 'Since the Soviet Union is a communist state, we shall fight shoulder to shoulder with Hitler'! Our people have an expression which sums up this hostile, pro-occupier stand of the Balli Kombëtar. It goes like this: 'To spite my mother-in-law I'm going to sleep with the miller.' And to spite the communists and the National Liberation Front, the Balli Kombëtar has united with German nazism against its own Albanian people. That is how matters stand with the Balli Kombëtar, General.

For these good reasons that I have outlined, we are at war with this traitor organization and its traitor chiefs. They are fighting against us, shoulder to shoulde, with the Germans, hence, they are on the other side of the barricade. We admit the elements that break away from this organization into the Front on condition that they fight. If they do not fight the Germans and we capture them arms in hand, we consider them their mercenaries and treat them as such.

«Although they see that their cause is lost, the traitor heads of the Balli Kombëtar and their quisling friends, acting on the instructions of their masters, think that by operating in this way they are working for the future. They are the blackest reaction, representatives of the beys, aghas and merchants who have oppressed the people and dream of oppressing them again tomorrow, but under the 'national' label, as 'nationalists' and 'democrats', and what is most important for them, under the 'anti-communist' label. However, the Albanian people cannot be led by the nose. They see clearly that the Albanian communists have put their lives in the service of the interests of the people. The Albanian people are linked like flesh to bone with the Communist Party that leads them. The quisling, Ballist and Zogite reaction are quite unable to conceive this close unity; they do not and never could think of it properly and realistically, because they cannot

imagine where its roots lie. Internal reaction has always relied on foreign reaction and the occupiers of our country. This traditional reliance has become second nature to those who have managed to rule in this way and cannot imagine any other way in which they can rule the people.

«On the one hand, the reactionaries think the people are ignorant, stupid and destined to remain oppressed for ever, and this, according to them, is beyond dispute. On the other hand, they imagine that they have influence among the people, that the people will say to the traitors, feudal lords, beys and blood-sucking usurers: 'Come on, we can hardly wait for you to climb on our backs again, to steal the crust of bread from our mouths, to suck our blood and kill us.' These are the illusions that guide Albanian reaction. Do you understand me, General?»

«Not very well,» he replied.

«Then I shall make it even clearer,» I said. «Albanian reaction, made up of quislings, Ballists and Zogites, etc., is exploiting its collaboration with the German nazis, their offensives against us, in order to destroy our links with the people, to liquidate us and tomorrow, when nazism is finally smashed, to have an organized fascist army and seize power. It is hoping for two things: that German arms will liquidate the people's war, and that with the support of world reaction

it will hold power after the defeat of Germany. Unfortunately for reaction, however, 'it is reckoning its account without the innkeeper', as our people say. It is not capable of liquidating our people's war, the people will never allow it to take power, because they are going to smash it to smithereens. The external reaction, on which it is pinning its hopes, when it changes its coat, will not be able to come to its aid, because our armed people will have put it in its place.»

When we took a break to drink a cup of tea, Dr. Nishani and the others joined in the conversation, adding their views in the spirit of the matters I raised.

After the break we continued the talk.

«General,» I resumed, «we believe that with your coming the relations between us will be strengthened. As you can imagine, the war has been and is fierce from every viewpoint for us Albanian partisans. Our principle is: relentless, fierce, uncompromising war against the occupiers. We are a people who in the past have been flayed, impoverished, burned and robbed of everything. What we have we defend tooth and nail. We had no weapons to fight with, but these we have we captured from the enemy and we'll continue to do so, and we are sparing nothing in the fight against it. For food we have the maize bread and onions of the poor who share them

with us willingly. Despite these conditions our partisans are indomitable. As you know war requires arms and ammunition to wipe out the maximum number of enemies. We are allies and as such we have sought and are seeking from you arms and some clothing and nothing else. Unfortunately your officers, who claim they have come to assist us — excuse me, General, but I must tell you frankly — have given us more promises than assistance. This is not a serious attitude. At the most, the occasional aircraft has dropped us a few weapons and a ridiculously small quantity of ammunition. This aid in armaments is so small that it doesn't count at all. There is a wise saying, General, which goes: 'You know your friends in troubled times.' We are a people who never ask for charity. We do not ask for chocolate or biscuits, but only for weapons to liberate our Homeland from our common enemy. You came to our country and promised us arms, then keep your word and give them to us.

«Allow me to tell you the opinion of our partisans. They say: 'The British officers who have come, say that they will help us with weapons, but where are the weapons? Why don't they give them to us? Then, why have they come here, or is it just to blow up the internal bridges linking the partisan zones?' And in fact, this is just what the British officer Smiley did. On his own initiative he blew up the Haxhi

Beqari Bridge which had no strategic value for the enemy, while blowing it up caused great difficulties for the people of the two regions which this bridge linked and for the partisans. The partisans have every right to ask such questions. Therefore, General, we believe that with your coming here this state of affairs will come to an end and from now on you will send us arms and ammunition.

«At the same time, we think you ought to stop dropping weapons to the Albanian reactionaries, collaborators with the Germans, who use these weapons to fight us. I tell you that our General Staff and our partisans, who are sacrificing their lives for the liberation of our Homeland, are indignant at these irresponsible acts of the British officers here.

«The last matter that I want to raise with you is that of the BBC. When it had no information about how events were developing in our country, we had no grounds for complaint in regard to the BBC, but now that the British missions have come here we cannot accept its equivocal stand. Not only does this Radio speak very rarely about the heroic war which the Albanian partisans are waging, but when it does mention it, it implies that the Ballists and the Zogites are fighting nazism. This is scandalous, General. This is deceit and a great insult to us who are doing the fighting. Instead

of telling the truth about us, your Radio talks about those who are united with the Germans! Therefore, we protest energetically about these lies of the BBC, which, by spreading propaganda in favour of reaction, is simply trying to confuse the Albanian people. That is all I have to say, General, and I thank you for the attention with which you have listened to me.»

During the whole time that Mustafa Gjinishi was translating, the British officer Nicholls, who accompanied Davies, took notes.

The General spoke again in reply. He said:

«You must excuse me, Mr. Hoxha, for being unable to reply to your complaint about the BBC, because, in the first place, I have not heard its broadcasts in the Albanian language and, as you know, neither I nor my officers know your language and, in the second place, as I told you, I am a military man and the BBC is a civil institution in which military men cannot meddle. In our country, Mr. Hoxha, there is democracy and division of labour.»

«Of course, there is division of labour,» I said, «but can you tell me who informed the BBC about the fighting in Vlora, which was waged by the partisans and which, astonishingly, was broadcast as fighting by the Ballists? It is your officers, with their powerful radio transmitters, that supply this information.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» the General hastened to explain, «our officers send their information to the

War Office.» (This was out of the frying-pan into the fire.)

«And that the War Office hands it on to the BBC, I understand. But I understand also that the War Office receives distorted reports from your officers,» I said, cutting him short.

«Oh, no, Mr. Hoxha,» said the General. «Possibly they are distorted by the Albanians who work in the BBC.»

«Then throw them out!» I retorted.

«However, I shall report what you told me,» he said and continued: «In regard to sending arms, we want to help all those who are fighting, but you understand there are many of them. We are dropping arms everywhere: in France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Holland, etc., etc., as well as in Albania. I understand that you may not have been dropped many weapons and the reason for this is not because we don't want to, but because we do not have all we need, and the main obstacles are the lack of aircraft, bad weather and the enemies' anti-aircraft defences. I understand your urgent need, because weapons are the main things in order to fight and I assure you that we shall drop weapons only to those who are fighting the German nazis and not to others. Nevertheless,» said the General cutting short this question so very important to us, «I shall examine your requirements carefully, in detail, and inform the War Office in London about this.

«However, Mr. Hoxha, I had one final question 1 wanted to discuss with you.»

«Go ahead», I said, «I am listening.»

I knew that what he was going to say constituted the whole purpose for which he had come to Albania.

«Mr. Hoxha,» began the British General, «I listened carefully to all your arguments in connection with the war against Italian and German fascism. We in London have been convinced that the Albanian people are fighting against the occupiers of their country and that this fight has extended and grown stronger. Both we and you are interested in bringing the war to an end as quickly as possible, but this cannot be achieved without smashing Hitlerite Germany, without shedding blood and making sacrifices. I agree with you that the whole people should be united in this anti-fascist war and, in order to achieve this, it is necessary to convince everybody of the need to fight this war. I understand very well what tremendous efforts the National Liberation Front has made in this direction and the successes which it has achieved, but in London it is thought that even greater efforts must be made. London believes that in Albania there is a large number of nationalists, non-communists, who for one reason or another have still not joined in the war. Perhaps these people are not yet thoroughly convinced about what is the hon-

ourable course, which is to fight the occupiers. Should we not show them this course, Mr. Hoxha?»

«We have been doing this ever since Italy invaded us on April 7, 1939,» I replied to this general-cum-diplomat, who was nothing but an old fox. «We have made a thousand and one efforts, have talked to these people individually, have invited them to come to meetings and rallies, indeed even to important meetings, where they could speak and express their views without being obliged to undertake any commitment, and we have also decided to carry out joint actions, as your predecessor, Mr. McLean, is well aware of, but none of those things which we have proposed has been accepted by those in whom you are interested. Why is this so? Because those who you describe as having Albanian blood in their veins, or as democrats, are but collaborators with the enemy, branded fascists and anti-Albanians.» And I listed the filthy acts of the Balli Kombëtar one by one.

«It was they who turned their weapons against us,» I told him, «who concluded the Dalmazzo-Këlcyra Agreement to suppress the National Liberation Movement and be in friendship with the Italians; who in February 1943 went with a senior officer of the Italian Military Intelligence (SIM) to the Ballist Safet Butka to persuade him to unite with them against us,

and who, together with the fascists, put whole regions to the torch and murdered children and old folk.

«When the Germans came, General, their hopes, which were dashed by the capitulation of Italy, revived, and thus they became tools of the nazis, too. We have documents in our possession which prove their collaboration with the nazis. We can give them to you if you like. To us all this is quite clear. Therefore, we have written off this appendage of the Gestapo and the German Wehrmacht. We have a duty only towards misled Albanians in their ranks to whom we address continual appeals to abandon their leaders' course of betrayal.»

«Precisely, Mr. Hoxha. We should make one final effort so that it will be possible for me to convince London properly that these elements are not for war against the German nazis,» interrupted the General. «You will understand that I ought to hear their reasons and try to convince them to fight. Therefore, I would like your opinion and your permission to hold a meeting with the nationalist chiefs to convince them to abandon the wrong course they have taken. I assure you that I shall come to give you an accurate account of the results of the talks.»

«As you yourself declared, General,» I said, «you have been attached to us, therefore, I did not expect such a proposal from a senior allied

officer. (In fact, I not only expected it, but I knew that this was the main purpose of his coming here.) Since you have been attached to us, you are not permitted to go outside our liberated territories to hold talks with the enemies of the Albanian people. Such a thing is neither right nor principled. The allied governments have declared that they will make no compromise with Hitlerite Germany. We consider your coming to the General Staff of the Partisan Army as an aid in order to drop us weapons, munitions and clothing in the service of our common war, as you yourself have stated.»

«But Mr. Hoxha,» objected the General, «I consider what I proposed to you as an aid to our common war.»

«No, General,» I cut him short, «you are mistaken. We have not sought and do not accept such an 'aid', because we have no need for it. I want to emphasize that you are taking upon yourself the role of mediator, of conciliator between us and traitors to our Homeland. We cannot accept such a thing, from you or from anyone else. I told you and I repeat that there is not and will never be any compromise with the Ballists, the Zogites, and the other collaborators with the Germans. Whoever attempts to make a compromise with them will be the sworn enemy of the Albanian people. At the beginning, General, you told me that you are not involved in

politics, that you are simply a soldier, but now, contrary to what you said, you want to carry out political activities with collaborators of the Germans! You asked for my opinion and permission and our answer is this: Your proposal i? regarded as unacceptable for the reasons which I gave you above, that is, because **we have no need to make peace with those who are our enemies to the end and we do not accept mediation.**»

«Your viewpoint is quite clear to me, Mr. Hoxha,» the Englishman hastened to say, «but I ask you to allow me to have just one meeting with them, sufficient to tell them that they must fight the Germans, and I assure you that I will say nothing about any 'agreement for conciliation'. That is not my affair.»

«In principle, General, I do not agree, either, that you should go from our liberated zones to them,» I added. «You could have gone directly to them, but that would be another question. However, I am not going to keep you prisoner. Since you insist, you may hold just one meeting with them, but we shall not allow a second meeting. You must choose whether you will stay with us or with them. If you are going to stay with us you will remain in our territories; if you want to stay with them, go to the territories controlled by the Germans, but we shall not allow you to come back here. I tell you once again, and

I am a hundred per cent certain of this, that reaction will never join in the war against the Germans. You said that you would inform me about your talk with the Ballist chiefs. I thank you for this, but it does not interest me in the least, because I know already what you will talk about.»

This brought the first talk with the British General to a close. He stayed to dinner with us and next day Mustafa Gjinishi and several partisans escorted him to his «lair» in Biza.

Now the manoeuvres and aims of the British government with its allegedly military missions, which it was sending to Albania under the pretext of helping the National Liberation War, were becoming even clearer. The call for vigilance which I addressed to all the communists, the individual letters which I sent to Haxhi Lleshi, Baba Faja, and the comrades of Vlora, Elbasan and Gjirokastra, as well as the discussions I held with Myslim about the question of the British officers, had been very necessary. Britain had temporarily changed its coat, but it was the same old Britain that we had known — imperialist, reactionary and an oppressor of the peoples. Naturally, it had neither the economic nor the military strength that it had had in the past, but it was practising the same trickery, intrigues and deception, indeed in more refined ways. True, Britain was fighting against the Germans,

was one of the members of the Anti-fascist Bloc, but it was clear and unwavering in both its wartime and its post-war aims. Britain and America wanted Germany to be smashed during the war, but they wanted to benefit from the war, wanted the Soviet Union to emerge weakened, and did not want reaction in all the countries occupied by the nazis to be liquidated by the people's forces, but on the contrary, wanted it to come out with the least possible damage and to take power after the liberation under «democratic» and other labels and, if this proved impossible, to compel the people to share power with it by claiming that it fired a couple of shots at the eleventh hour. This was one of the main aims of the British and the Americans. Already during the war they were supporting reaction in various countries, advising it to be careful, to organize itself with the aid of the occupiers, to step up the attacks together with the enemy against the communists and the people's forces, to come out in the fight under allegedly national slogans and to seize power on the eve of liberation, while promising that it would have their powerful aid.

This is why the British and Americans were trying in every way to get into the occupied countries, so that on the one hand, under the disguise of giving military aid, they could create their agencies within the national liberation

movements to sabotage these movements and their war, and on the other hand, to assist reaction with weapons, gold, organization and advice.

It was precisely because I feared that this was what they were up to that I devoted such attention to the true aims of the British and gave the organizations of the Party and the partisan detachments such detailed instructions as soon as the first British mission headed by McLean entered Albania.

Everything which we heard from General Davies fully confirmed our beliefs. We should not have the slightest illusion that Britain was going to assist our war. No. This mission, in particular, like all the other missions, had only the aims I mentioned above. Its aim was purely political.

The reason Brigadier General Davies and his group came to us was, first, that we were the biggest and indeed the only organized political and ideological fighting force in Albania; they could not send him either to the Balli Kombëtar or to the Zogites, because they knew that they represented nothing much. Second, they sent the General and his staff to us, as I said previously, to learn about our political and military organization, to discover our strong and weak points so that they could fight us more effectively, in order to put our National Liberation War under their political and military leadership and, if

this proved impossible, to compromise and corrupt cadres and staffs with a few weapons, a few clothes or a few hundred sovereigns, in order to destroy us from within.

However, our Party was vigilant towards them, even after the victory over the occupiers, and this was one of its greatest merits. The Party fought against the occupier of that time, as well as against the camouflaged enemies of the future.

Naturally, the plans of the British in Albania were failing. London was alarmed, radiograms were sent back and forth; undoubtedly things were not in order at either end, therefore it sent General Davies as head of the mission. London sent him to tell us that they valued our war highly and put us to sleep, that allegedly «the General had authority to settle the disagreements which might have emerged between us and the British mission», and finally, that «with his coming they would send us more weapons.» We did not believe any of this.

After General Davies left, the comrades and I sat talking till late into the night. Finally I drew the following conclusions about the aims for which he had been sent here:

First, to make contact with the heads of the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites and, through them, with the quislings, to advise them on be-

half of London on how they should organize themselves to be ready when Germany capitulated in the near future, to assure them that they would always have the full support of Britain and America.

Second, to instruct them that on no account must they allow the communists to take power in the future.

Third, to instruct them how they should organize their forces «illegally» and carry out some sham actions. To this end, he would attach some British missions to them and might also send others to organize and direct these activities. The General would promise them weapons and money. We know that all the traitors have always been ready to sell their souls and their Homeland for lire and pounds, and the British know and exploit this weakness of theirs.

Fourth, to study the situation and strength of different chiefs of reaction, to sound out the terrain, to gain first-hand knowledge of the tendencies of the various groups, the possibility of alliances between them and of gathering them around some particular individual or some new, less compromised group, as the British put it. However, I think that the British are trying to rally reaction around Zog as a «constitutional» monarch, a «reformer» and «democrat», and undoubtedly, the General has come to see what

the traitor chiefs think of this «brilliant» idea (**1**) of the British. The special concern which they are displaying for the Zogites unwittingly betrays this plan. We saw that Bazi i Canës, the Zogite who came to the Conference of Peza and was elected to the General Staff, did not fire a single shot, or carry out any of the joint decisions. Nevertheless, it was on him that McLean's eyes were fixed. We must continue to make this clear to the Party, the army and the National Liberation Front so that no cadre makes a false step out of naive trust.

Fifth, General Davies has certainly come also to give new instructions to all the missions in our country, to check up on their work, to learn about the situation and the possibilities for action as they see them and to reach the necessary conclusions about the meeting with the heads of the Balli Kombëtar, and after all these things are done, he will set his missions further tasks for the «new situations» which will be created.

However, in order to achieve all these

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1 On November 19, 1943, General Davies sent Cairo a radiogram to be passed on to London in which amongst other things he said: «d)...They [LNC — the National Liberation Movement] are dead against Zog. The Balli Kombëtar approves of such a committee [government in exile] and Zog's association with it. *(FO 371/37145-3741. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the Archives of the Institute of History, (AIH), Tirana.)*

things, they are obliged to do something, even if only formally, to give the impression that they are fighting the enemy and helping us, for otherwise, it will not be easy for them to put their plans into operation tomorrow.

«Therefore, we must keep their aims clearly in mind and time will prove that we are right,» I told the comrades. «We must take all measures to ensure that we crush the enemy occupiers and foil the secret military and political plans of the British and their lackeys, the Ballists, the Zogites and the bajraktars. Only through a fierce armed struggle and ideological struggle, guided by our Party, will all the enemy intrigues be exposed and defeated. We are going to smash them, going to liberate the country, and the people, under the leadership of the Party, will take power into their own hands,» I wound up my remarks to the comrades who fully endorsed the political and organizational conclusions I put before them.

On the same day I summoned comrades in charge of our partisan units to inform them about the talks with General Davies and instruct them to step up the struggle against the occupiers and the traitors and increase their vigilance towards any action of the British.

Next morning Mustafa Gjinishi returned from Biza. As he related to us, the General had given him cocoa, chocolate, cake and fresh butter for breakfast.

«What did the General have to say, what were his impressions when he left?» I asked Mustafa.

«Oh, he was very impressed and happy that you spoke openly to him,» he replied, «and he told me, 'Mr. Hoxha strongly defended the interests of the National Liberation Front.' The General said, 'I hope I shall always be able to talk with you in this way',» added Mustafa.

Of course, Mustafa Gjinishi was a liar and we had long had suspicions of him, but later it would be proved clearly that he was an agent of the British.

Our partisan war against the Germans and their tools continued fiercely and without interruption. The BBC still remained silent about this war and churned out reports about the «war» that the Ballists and the Zogites were waging. The weeks and months went by and the British dropped us some automatic rifles, but without sufficient ammunition, occasionally dropped some clothing or a few boots, although these were often only for one foot, a thing which made the partisans laugh and say: «Apparently the British want us to march and fight on one foot... but we'll get by with our *opinga* (**1**) with which our ancestors have fought.» The quantity of weapons, ammunition and cloth-

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1 opinga — home-made greenhide sandals.

ing which they sent us was ridiculously small. Under the pretext of supplying us with weapons, the British officers tried to get into our detachments to learn what forces we had, how they were organized, where they were stationed and where they operated and so on. But they ran up against a brick wall everywhere. All that the partisans would say to the British officers was: «Why don't you drop us weapons?» As usual, the British made all sorts of lying excuses.

The British officers asked for information on the German forces, wanted us to give them the emblems and numbers of the detachments to which the Germans killed in battle belonged, and we gave them any amount of these. They wanted to go all over the place, to check up on things, to make contact with our units and we, of course, did not keep them on a chain. We allowed them to travel through the mountains and gorges, but they were unable to learn what they wanted. They were always accompanied by two or three partisans, an interpreter and one or two of our trusted peasants to look after their mules. Hence, in this direction our comrades were very vigilant. However, sometimes the vigilance slackened and there were instances when the British officers sent to the partisan forces in Dibra escaped from their supervision and managed to link up with the chiefs of reaction in Dibra, for instance, Fiqri Dine and Xhem Gostivari,

and even attacked our forces in Peshkopia together with them. I wrote a letter to Comrade Haxhi Lleshi, instructing him to give the British a final warning and tell them that our bullets would make no distinction between the enemy and those who united with the enemy to attack us. Once again it was clear that the British missions were operating to assist the gentry against us, putting into practice the directives that they received from London.

Our prediction that they chose to reside in Biza, because it was a more suitable place from which the General could make intensive contacts with the British missions in the North and would have frequent contacts with Mat, Dibra and Central Albania, was proved correct. Naturally, we kept all their movements under observation — why should we hide this? — but what they talked about and what they decided we did not know. We watched and discovered their decisions during their practical application.

This is how General Davies worked against us, but we were not asleep.

Some time had passed since I had met the General, when Frederik Nosi came one day and informed me that the General had told him that he had finally managed to contact the heads of the Balli Kombëtar and they had agreed to come to a meeting with him in Shëngjergj. «I

believe that Lumo Skëndo(**1**),Begeja and some others will be at this meeting,» the General had told him. Therefore, he had instructed Frederik to inform our General Staff about this matter.

I told Frederik to transmit to the General that our Staff would put ten partisans at his disposal to protect him from any German attack, but the General himself must bear responsibility for this meeting with the Ballists, because he had wanted and prepared it contrary to the desire of the political commissar of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army. I instructed Frederik, who knew about the talk I had had with the General, «You must adopt a stand of indifference. Take command of the partisans, go to Ali Shtëpani and tell him to have his men ready for any eventuality, take up your positions, listen carefully to anything which the General may say afterwards, but give the impression that you are not greatly interested. If he tells you to transmit his words to me, tell him, 'It would be better to tell him yourself'.»

General Davies held the meeting with Lumo Skëndo and returned to Biza immediately. He told Frederik, «It was a fiery meeting and Mr. Hoxha was absolutely right about certain things, but in the end I managed to convince them that they must fight.» And, as far as I remember, he

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1 Mithat Frashëri, chairman of the CC of Balli Kombëtar.

had even received a document with this promise in writing. Frederik had listened to him with indifference and told him: «The Balli Kombëtar won't fight, it is up to its neck in treachery, they are deceiving you.» Brigadier Davies did not ask Frederik to report to me, because I had told him that the talks which he would hold with the Ballists did not interest me. However, he knew Frederik would inform me.

A little later Frederik came and told me that the General had invited me and the comrades with me to go to dinner at his quarters in Biza. I accepted the invitation and in the afternoon of November 11, accompanied by partisans and taking Mustafa Gjinishi as interpreter and member of the Staff, I set out from Orenja. I arrived at Biza in the evening. There, in front of the main tent, I received a smiling welcome from the General accompanied by his adjutant, Colonel Nicholls of the *Coldstream Guards*, if I'm not mistaken. We shook hands and entered the tent because it was very cool. It was windy at night on that open plateau.

The General was comfortably set up in his field tent. Everything, from the table in the middle, to the upholstered stools, could be folded up for packing. The bulldog with the beautiful collar round its neck was curled up on his bed. Dinner was a cold meal with tinned meat and

fish, imported and local cheese, several kinds of local fruit, chocolate, English cigarettes, raki, whisky and wine. The General invited me to sit at the head of the table and we all took our places. He filled our glasses with whisky.

I said to him: «Just a little for me, because I've never drunk it before, but I shall do so in your honour as my host. Pour me a glass of raki because this is what my ancestors, grand-father and father have drunk.»

«You are conservative, Mr. Hoxha,» he said.

«I cannot fail to favour the fine things of my people,» I said. «We must love our Homeland more than our lives. For instance, you General bring your whisky from Britain by aircraft.»

«Whisky is a very fine drink. I like it very much,» said Mustafa Gjinishi.

«Then drink it,» I said, «but watch out it doesn't go to your head, because I'm not going to carry you to Orenja.»

There was general laughter and we began a free conversation, but as the people say, the tongue automatically goes to the tooth that's aching. All of us were thinking about politics, the main problem was hammering away in all our heads, but we kept off it, because we knew we would quarrel, since on this our interests differed completely. First we talked about litera-

ture. I talked about ours and he talked about his. He knew nothing at all about our literature. The culture which I had acquired in France and the many books which I had read had given me some knowledge about a series of British authors.

«We're well acquainted with Shakespeare,» I said, «not only from school, but especially from the brilliant translations which our poet, historian and revolutionary democrat Fan Noli has made of his works. Just as Fitzgerald made Omar Khayyam 'speak' English, our Noli made the great Shakespeare 'speak' Albanian.»

That night in Biza, with the north wind blowing, I talked to the General about the winter nights of *David Copperfield*, about the humour of Jerome K. Jerome, about Swift and Byron, Shelley and Kipling.

«You regard Kipling as a great writer, General,» I said, «but I hate him because he is one of your writers who sings hymns in praise of the colonial conquests of the British Empire in his works. I prefer your great Byron, whom the new generation of English people has neglected, preferring poets and writers of little value. I like Byron, not because I am a romantic, but because he sincerely loved my people, has sung their praises with pure feelings and has, as I have read somewhere, even named his daughter Alba, thus expressing his admiration for the Albanian people. As you know, in

his famous *Childe Harold* he sings, to the valour, manliness and maturity of the Albanians:

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were these virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?

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Their wrath how deadly! but their friend-
ship sure,
When gratitude or valour bids them bleed,
Unshaken rushing on wherever their chief
may lead.

«These characteristics of our ancestors we have kept alive. We love our friends and welcome them with hospitality, while for enemies we have bullets. You, General Davies, are our friend and ally.»

The General bowed, smiling as he said, *«Thank you.»*

«Byron loved the peoples who fought for freedom. This he prized above all and he sang of it:

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can
bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —
To fetters, and the damp valut's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyr-dom,
And freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

«Do you know, General, who were Byron's most faithful followers and his inseparable companions? Two Albanian bodyguards whom his friend, Ali Pasha Tepelena, had given him. They loved Byron so much that, as I have read somewhere, once, when he was in the throes of a terrible fever, they were so desperately worried about him that they summoned the doctor and told him, 'Cure him or we shall kill you!'

«We like Byron and we want the British people to love the Albanian people as he did.»

«You've won my heart, Mr. Hoxha,» said the General. «I knew that you were acquainted with French literature, but you seem to be well acquainted with ours, too.»

«We Albanians, General, have a thirst for freedom and for knowledge. We have fought for them both through the centuries. We are fighting for them now and will fight tomorrow, too, if need be,» I said, and we both raised our glasses, mine with raki and his with whisky, and Gjinishi, who was deep in pleasant conversation

with Colonel Nicholls, did not lag behind with his glass.

«Have you been through any military schools?» the General asked me.

«Yes, I have,» I answered.

«Where?» asked the General.

«I've been through the military school of my people, which is a school of great experience. You have heard of Gjergj Kastrioti, Skanderbeg,» I said. «He became famous throughout the world because he fought against the Ottoman Turks, against two of their greatest sultans. He led 22 battles and never lost one. Sultan Mehmet-Fatih captured Constantinople, but as long as Skanderbeg was alive, he could not take Kruja.»

«He was from the North,» remarked the General cunningly.

«He was an Albanian,» I replied curtly, understanding the General's allusion(**1**),«and he was a prince who relied on the people. He loved the people and they loved him.»

«Yours is a beautiful country,» said the General, changing the direction of the conversation, «that is why Byron loved it. In England we have a picture in which he is portrayed in Albanian dress. When we win the war, Mr. Hoxha. I hope you will invite me to

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1 To A. Zog and A. Kupi who were from the North, too.

come to visit your country,» said the General, trying to give the conversation a pleasant and intimate tone.

«Of course, you must come and get to know it well, because both our country and our people are marvellous. You must not be left with the outdated impression you have formed from the tendentious reports of British consuls who wrote things to your Foreign Office, which were not true and which had ulterior motives, or from the reports of 'collectors' of flowers and butterflies, who in reality were doing other work. Of course, I'm not referring to scholars such as Miss Durham who travelled Albania, especially the North, to study the life in the Northern Highlands and did not write badly about it. But the times have changed, General. The British Empire no longer has its former strength and power, while in our country, the power of the beys and the bajraktars is declining and the end of this war will put the lid on their grave.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» replied the General, «it is true that our Empire is not what it was in Victorian times, but we are a democratic monarchy, you might say. In our country there is not one party but two, one of which is of the Labourites, i.e., of the workers, the other of the Conservatives. In our country we have free elections.»

«I know about your system of democracy,» I

said, «but in that system the workers 'hold keys of straw', as an expression of ours puts it. It is democracy for the capitalists, for the lords, but not for the workers. When we win we shall establish democracy, but not like that democracy of yours. In our country there will be democracy only for the people, while the 'keys of straw',» I said with a laugh, «will be in the hands of the beys, aghas and the bajraktars, who have always oppressed and betrayed the people.»

«Do you mean you're going to take all their property from them, Mr. Hoxha?» asked the General.

«Of course, General. The evil-doers, the enemies, those who have stained their hands with blood, will certainly be handed over to the people's courts, while we'll put the rest of them to work, to sweat and learn how tasty food is when you've earned it with your own toil.»

«That is why they do not want to unite with you, Mr. Hoxha, because they are afraid of you,» said the General.

«They have good reason to be afraid. They know what they have inflicted on our people throughout all their existence, that is why they are afraid of us. Nevertheless, we and the people have appealed to them to abandon their course of betrayal. They have not listened and will

suffer the consequences. In the National Liberation Front we have people from the wealthy strata, who are patriots, and we and the people respect them for their patriotic anti-fascist stand.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» said the General, «I had a talk with Mr. Lumo Skëndo and others and I spoke to them straight from the shoulder. I reproached them and said to them, 'As far as I can see, only the National Liberation Front is fighting against the Germans, while you are not fighting.' But they denied this, and all but accused me of being a communist. However, I persisted in my argument and, in the end, I believe I convinced them and they gave me their word that they would fight.»

«They'll fight against us,» I told him.

«Oh, no, Mr. Hoxha,» said the General, «against the Germans.»

«In that case, let me assure you that they have deceived you. They have not fought and never will fight the Germans. Remember these words I'm saying to you. They will continue their betrayal of the people to the end, with weapons and every other means, in close collaboration with the Germans.»

Up till the time he fell in the hands of the Germans as a prisoner, General Davies saw for

himself (**1**) the fact that the Ballists and the Zogites did not fire one shot against the enemy occupier. The traitor organization of Lumo Skëndo and Ali Këlcyra continued their treachery at a savage level and that is why the British pinned greater hopes on the gang of Abaz Kupi, attached to whom were the wily officers McLean and Amery,

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1 In regard to this he wrote to his centre on December 17, 1943 as follows:

«1. Now recommend a change. Situation developed recently so much imperative now denounce Regency Council collectively and by name. Also BALKOM and ZOGISTS.

2. All are cooperating with Germans, who are exploiting them with arms in large quantities, setting them to guard main roads, police towns and lead patrols thus freeing German troops.

3. All recent actions fought by LNC have met mixed German Balkom bodies well armed German-trained. Battles PEZA and DIBRA areas, especially latter, have ample proof closest collaboration.

4. BALKOM and ABAS KUPI both promised me fight Germans actively, but not one action have they fought this past month, although there have been many chances for them to resist the Germans...

5. Both the BALKOM and ZOGISTS now publish expensive ambitious newspapers obviously German set-up. In eight editions there has not been one anti-German reference. Both parties boasting ALLIES will cooperate with them after Germans go quoting as evidence Britain's failure to name the Regency Council or any political party [in Albania]. Example: — B.B.C. Director's speech to ALBANIA on 28th November.

G. I would have preferred to explain personally when I come

of whom the latter, if I'm not mistaken, has been a minister in several Conservative governments since the war.

With such conversation we passed the dinner with the Englishman Davies. About 11 o'clock at night we thanked the General for his hospitality, took our leave and departed from Biza. The wind had freshened and the rustle of the forest seemed to make it even stronger. Mustafa Gjinishi had a great glow from all the whisky he had drunk and no doubt also from that conversation by the stove with Colonel Nicholls, which seemed to have been pleasant. He volunteered nothing about what they had discussed, so I stirred him up a little.

«Mustafa,» I said, «you speak English very well. It seems to me you've improved on what you learned at the Technical School. I don't understand English, but I have the impression that you speak it more readily and easily than

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out, but I may be delayed, and am unlikely to reach you before mid-January at the earliest.

7. I consider the ALLIES' attitude should be made public forthwith, showing Quislings, traitors and non-resisters to Germans will receive appropriate punitive treatment from the Allies in due course... Therefore, I recommend an open declaration for the L.N.C. *(Telegram No. 3 to SOE in Cairo to be passed on to London, FO 371/37145-3741. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

Frederik. When you are translating I believe you translate my expressions faithfully. This evening you left me with Frederik and got the Colonel going. What did he say, Mustafa?»

«Oh, he was talking to me about the war. I asked him about the life and biography of some British generals and ministers like Montgomery, Beaverbrook, Eden and so on,» he replied.

«Both the General and the Colonel seem good fellows. The General looks a bit dull-witted, but he finds the way to say the things he wants to. Anyway,» I said, «the important thing for us is that they drop us weapons and stop their propaganda from the BBC which attributes our fight to the Ballists and the Zogites.»

We walked together through the forest, accompanied by our partisans. The wind whistled around our ears. Our automatic rifles were slung from our shoulders. I had an American Thompson, which one of the comrades had brought me as a gift after an action against the Germans and the Ballists. We walked in silence. The combination of the whisky he had drunk, the enthusiasm seething inside him, and that night journey amidst the sighing of the wind in the forest, apparently encouraged Mustafa, who began to tell me about a proposal which the British General had made to him through the Colonel, that representatives of the National

Liberation Front should go to London for talks with the British government. (I shall not dwell on this question here, because I shall do so in the next chapter.)

What Mustafa told me highlighted and confirmed my suppositions about the tasks and aim of the British General. Likewise, it proved more clearly that Mustafa Gjinishi was an agent of the Intelligence Service in the General Staff of the National Liberation Army.

The liaison officer of our Staff with the British officers had informed me about some questions which the General had put to him some days earlier: «How strong is the Communist Party? Does it have links with Moscow? What position has it in the National Liberation Front? Are the Albanian partisans linked with Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia?»

To all these questions our comrade had given the agent of the Intelligence Service the answer he deserved. So this was what the «soldier», who was not «involved in politics» wanted to discover!

He also informed me about the quarrels the General had had with Baba Faja in connection with his «excursions». Baba Faja had warned him several times not to venture outside his territory, because he might strike some Ballist village and, if anything occurred, he would be to blame. However, the General had replied with great

indignation: «Wherever I go is my responsibility, not yours. I shall go even to the villages where the Balli Kombëtar has influence without running into any danger.»

His meeting with the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar and with Abaz Kupi, the questions he had asked and the «excursions» which he tried to make, spoke clearly of what this delegate of the «British Lion», who posed as a proper *gentleman**, really was.

I advised the comrades of Elbasan to keep General Davies and his staff under special supervision. I instructed Frederik to be very vigilant during their movements and meetings. I instructed the commander and commissar of the zone, who both knew English, to be vigilant, to visit the General sometimes, to encourage him to talk, but to give nothing away. I notified Mat, Dibra, Martanesh and Shëngjergj once again that the orders which I had sent them in regard to the British officers, remained in force. I personally went to Tirana and from there to Babë Myslim in Peza. I inspected the forces of the 3rd Shock Brigade, talked with the comrades of its staff, ordered them to speed up and strengthen its organization and to be in full readiness to go into action in whatever zone they were allocated to, as soon as I sent them the order.

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* English in the original.

Ammunition was short in Peza. The representative of the British mission there, a major as tall as a bean-pole, with a bristling little moustache, was telling the same old lies that the arms and ammunition would be coming, perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow. I gave Myslim a sum of money to buy a little maize, salt and a few weapons. I held various meetings with the organization and regional committee of the Party, summoned Gogo Nushi, and the four of us, Myslim, Gogo, Shule and I, took decisions on the organization of fiercer fighting actions in the direction of Tirana and the roads leading to it, on the question of supplies and on the dispatch of commissars to other units.

When I finished my work in the zone of Peza, I went up the left side of the Erzen River to Petrela, crossed the river, and passed into the zone of Elbasan through Qafa e Pëllumbasit. In Elbasan I met the comrades of the Regional Committee of the Party, who informed me of the situation there. I saw that morale was very high everywhere.

On November 28, 1943, I went to Shëngiergj of Tirana district to take part in the ceremony of the formation of the 2nd Shock Brigade. General Davies had come there, too, on the invitation of our General Staff. With his own eyes he saw how poorly the partisans were clothed and armed, and also saw their enthusiasm,

drive and determination on the course on which the Party was leading them. But with his miserable bourgeois spirit he was completely unmoved. My patience ran out and I said to him:

«You see, Mister Representative of the Allied mission, very few of them have great-coats, and nearly all of them are without boots, have only sandals made of old tyres or greenhide. Winter is coming and great battles await them. As you see, they are poorly armed, too. You are dropping us nothing. What are you doing about all those promises?»

«I've told you before,» he replied. «We are not going to supply you with clothing and armaments as long as you are fighting amongst yourselves.»

Boiling with indignation I no longer cared what I said to him. I went so far as to warn him: «Either keep your promises or clear out!» In the face of my protest, which was an expression of the anger of all the comrades, of all the partisans, the General felt himself in a very tight spot.

I left the newly formed_brigade and with a few comrades went to Ali Shtëpani's house. There we talked over the question of Abaz Kupi. He had come, too, accompanied by about 100 men, to the Ballist Osman Mema. On December 7 we had a meeting with him there. He insisted that we should recognize Legaliteti and the despot

Zog as king. We were well aware what Bazi i Canës was, but we were concerned about people deceived by him. There we saw that we had come to the end of the road with him. The Council expelled him from its ranks *de jure*. This was a slap in the face for his friends, the British, too. From Shëngjergj I went to Labinot and from there to the cottages of Shmil.

There we decided to proceed to the region of Korça together with the 3rd Brigade which was to carry out attacks on the roads to Bilisht and Kolonja, which were used by German columns. I had also to check up on the situation of the partisan forces of Korça and the activity of the party organization in that region, and to discuss the course for party cadres which we were to open in the village of Panarit.

Thus, we would have to cross the Shkumbin River before the heavy rain and snow began, and while attacking the German forces on the Librazhd road, make a route march through Polis. Shpat, the district south of Librazhd, to come out at Opar, and from there go on to Voskopoja, etc. We set the starting time. I informed the 3rd Brigade to begin the march and to be at Lower Labinot on the appointed day. I ordered the battalions of Dumre and Çermenika to be in readiness for the night when the forces would make the crossing of the Shkumbin River. I also informed the British General and his Staff

that they could come with our Staff to the region of Korça if they wished. The General jumped at this proposal and replied that he would be ready the moment I informed him.

We were prevented from starting out on the set date through the fault of the commander of the 3rd Brigade, Hulusi Spahiu, who proved to be an adventurer, and later, after Liberation, ended up an agent of the Yugoslavs and was condemned to imprisonment. The command of the 3rd Brigade had not taken any organizational measures*, the brigade dawdled on the journey and was caught in a blizzard, had not kept its movements secret and ran into a clash with the Germans, and thus was in disarray when it arrived at the arranged place. It was necessary to rest and organize the partisans.

Our crossing to the South failed also because the information which Kadri Hoxha, commander of the Staff of the Elbasan Group, gave us was completely wrong. He had neglected the importance of this undertaking, stayed at Orenja quite unconcerned idling away his time talking with Beg Balla and the British, while the enemy went into action and killed some of our men. I sent him a letter** in which I said bluntly that the zone of Elbasan was still very weak militarily and that res-

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* See Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 2, p. 95, Alb. ed.

** Ibidem.

ponsibility for this state of affairs and for the failure of the attempt of the Staff to cross to the South fell on him, first of all. I pointed out in the letter that I had several times striven to help and advised him that he should take measures and get moving and that now I had no other course but to report the situation to the proper quarters, because whenever I had criticized him and instructed him to act, he repeated the same words: «You don't know me well.» «When you are summoned, you will have to explain these things to the proper quarters, because you either neglect your work or do not do it at all, and the rumours that you have been spreading, that we have turned your battalion into couriers, are not true,» I wrote to him. Later, after Liberation, this person, too. came out in his true colours. He showed his real features by carrying on anti-state and anti-Party activity and for this he was condemned and expelled from the Party.

After all preparations had been made, we were ready to cross the river at the ford because, as I have written, the Haxhi Beqari bridge had been blown up by an officer of the British mission. We sent some comrades to reconnoitre the ford. It was passable. The crossing would be made quickly at night. We got down there at the set time, but just as we reached the road the couriers of our vanguard came to inform

us that the Shkumbin was in flood. I went myself to the ford and saw that it was impassable. We returned to our base. There we were to stay until we received reliable information on which way it was possible to go.

Since we had time at our disposal, I had a talk with the British General. I spoke about our war, while he asked some questions:

«Is the National Liberation Movement a communist movement, Mr. Hoxha?» In the end the British fox fired his blank cartridge. I knew that this was what was inwardly burning him up, therefore I replied very tersely:

«Its aim is to defeat the occupiers and the traitors who have united with them. This is also the objective of the Allies, General, is it not?»

Not content with this, he asked another, more insidious question:

«If you take power after Liberation, do you intend to establish a regime like that of Moscow in Albania?»

This was a question which could be inferred in every action and thought of the British, therefore it made no great impression on me.

«The free people will decide that,» I told him, and repeated: «free from the occupiers and their lackeys, the Ballists, the Zogites and others. The people themselves will establish the regime they want, and this we have stated publicly. I am astonished, General, that you did not know this.

What is more, the time to make this a reality is approaching. Then our people will live happy days. The worker will work without exploiters and the peasant will enjoy his own land. Life will be pleasant for them. Their sons and daughters will go to school.»

To fill the silence which ensued following my reply, the General mumbled:

«With the appointment of political commissars in the army, the National Liberation Movement is following the example of the Russians.»

«This form of organization has given splendid results in the Soviet Union and is yielding good results here in Albania, too,» I replied. «Why should we not benefit from the experience of the Soviet Union? It is one of our great Allies, is it not?»

Davies had no more to say. Thus, in silence, we joined the comrades who were waiting for us. Reports had arrived. It was impossible to cross by the Murrash Bridge because the enemy were guarding it.

Meanwhile, the German nazis had massed large forces round the regions of Çermenika, Shëngjergj and Martanesh, and were preparing to begin their operation against them. Before long the enemy launched their operation. Serious danger threatened us. In these conditions it was impossible to cross the Librazhd-Elbasan

road or to stay where we were any longer. So we thought we should cross to the South through Golloborda, Çermenika e Vogël, Hotolisht and come out in Mokra or Bërzeshta, and from there go over to the Korça region. This is what we decided.

The British General was with us, together with his colonel. He was cheerful and impatient to get to Korça. I remember that during a conversation he asked me:

«Is it easy to get to Greece from Korça?»

«Yes,» I said, «but you'd best ask McLean about that. He came in that way himself with two companions without our knowing anything about it.»

No doubt the General was overjoyed that he was getting closer to Greece.

Apparently the Germans had detected our movements toward Elbasan and the Shkumbin River and back, and quickly prepared an offensive to wipe us out in the region of Labinot. Shmil, etc. The Germans were engaged by our partisan forces of the 2nd and 3rd Brigades and the territorial battalions of Çermenika, Dumre, etc.

The enemy offensive of December 19 found us at Orenja. That evening we left Orenja and headed northwards through the beech forest. Since Dr. Nishani and Boshnjaku were elderly and the road was long, difficult and full of

dangers, we parted with them in the forest. We left them at Guri i Muzhaqit in a cave which we had set up as a room with a fire-place, beds, reserves of food, etc.

There was no more talk about the 3rd Brigade. The General Staff had to travel alone, escorted by the partisans who guarded the members of the Staff. We were led by the commander of the Staff of the Partisan Group of Elbasan, Kadri Hoxha, and a çeta commander of Baba Faja's battalion. The former had come in person, as someone familiar with the terrain, to play the role of guide, but at the same time also to display his «ability» which we allegedly did not acknowledge!

We travelled all night in the forest in Orenja through the darkness and the snow. On the following day we continued the march and came out at Kaptina of Martanesh. Nightfall caught us there but we did not stop until we entered the forest of Okshtun. There, after great efforts, we managed to light a fire and spent the whole night huddled around it. At daybreak we set out again and reached Okshtun where we stayed one night.

After consulting with the comrades from Dibra, we decided to go on from Okshtun through the forests to descend to Studa Flat and to cross into the Librazhd zone via Letëm where the Germans had still not stationed troops.

We set off again amidst the snow and the cold towards Studa Flat. We thought longingly about that pleasant night we passed in the warm house in Okshtun. Moments like those we passed that night were rare for us. However, we were at war and there are no long rests for fighters. Hence, let the British officer see once again what great moral and physical strength, what iron endurance the partisans had, let him gain first-hand knowledge of the strength of communists who through self-sacrifice had withstood and were withstanding the Italians, the Germans, the cold and hunger.

We crossed the Librazhd-Dibra road at Studa Flat and began the climb up Letëm Mountain. Night fell when we were in the forest on Letëm Mountain where we slept huddled together. We and the British had one tent. They ate chocolate and biscuits while we ate maize bread, a morsel of cheese and an onion, but even those supplies we had were running out. They drank whisky to warm themselves up; we melted snow and drank water to quench our thirst. The following day we moved in the direction of Qarrishta. Another long march through the snow and the biting north wind. During the march I frequently gave a word of encouragement to the General who was red in the face and from time to time took out a small flask to drink a mouthful of whisky. At no time was he generous enough to say:

«Have a mouthful to warm yourself up, Mr. Hoxha!» He and his colonel were continually munching chocolate. By way of a joke I said to him:

«Don't eat it all at once, General, because nobody knows how long the partisans' road may be. See, we don't eat on the march.» In fact we had nothing to eat.

When we reached the forest of Qarrishta, the vanguard informed us that we could go no further towards Çermenika e Vogël in the direction of Mokra or towards Bërzeshta, because reaction was extremely strong there. The Ballist çetas of Aziz Biçaku and others were on the alert and had blocked all the roads, passes and tracks. We had no option but to turn back towards Okshtun.

I informed the General, who had lagged behind, that we could not go on because of the Ballist-German armed reaction and that we had to change course. Apparently the British General had run out of patience, lost his temper and begun to be frightened. He sent his orderly to me to say that the General wanted me to wait so that he could talk to me.

«All right, let him come, I shall wait for him,» I said.

We stopped and erected the tent. The General came, accompanied by Frederik.

«He's angry and scared to death,» Frederik told me.

«We are giving him some bitter medicine to swallow,» I said.

As soon as he arrived, I explained quietly that we could not get through in this direction.

«We shall return to our starting-point and get out in some other direction,» I explained. «We shall take measures and inform Baba Faja, too.»

«I'm losing my patience, Mr. Hoxha,» said the General, red-faced and angry.

«It seems you have forgotten the advice that Kipling gives his son in one of his poems: 'If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs... You will be a man, my son!' Why have you lost your patience?» I asked.

«We have been all these days and nights in the darkness and the snow which remind me of nights in the mountains of Scotland, roaming through mountains and forests and making no headway.»

«This is war, General,» I continued, «our road is not strewn with rose petals.»

«But I want to break through, to get out of this,» he persisted.

«Where will you go?» I asked. «Will you go alone? What impels you to go?»

The General replied angrily:

«I do not account for what I do to anyone except my superiors.»

I said to him calmly:

«I do not want you to render account to me, but you must understand that we are allies. You have been sent to our Staff and we're responsible for your safety. Whatever occurs must occur to us together, but I assure you that nothing will occur.»

«No,» said the General haughtily, «I shall go to Korça without you.»

«You may want to do so, but I shall not allow it,» I said.

«Why, am I your prisoner?» exclaimed the General raising his voice.

«No, you are not our prisoner, but you are our ally and friend and I cannot allow the Germans to kill you.»

«Since I am not your prisoner and am a representative of Great Britain, I shall go even without your permission,» the General replied.

«Keep your temper, General», I said, «if you put the question in this way, I shall not stop you from going, but only on certain conditions: you must give me a signed document which says that you yourself took the responsibility and left the General Staff of the National Liberation Army without the approval and against the desire of me and our Staff. I am certain that you are going to your death or captivity, therefore I cannot allow you to take Frederik or any other partisan, because I am responsible to the people for the safety of their sons.»

The General was taken aback and, seeing no way out, snorted furiously:

«I shall issue no such document, Mr. Hoxha. As anyone can see, it is all up with you. You are lost. The Germans have staged a big, co-ordinated offensive and your forces have been routed. Now there is nothing for it except for us to leave and you to surrender. But your eyes are blinded and you can see nothing. You have no hope; you have lost the war, you are encircled and are left with only two courses: either to kill yourselves or to surrender.»

This was too much for my self-control. I jumped to my feet (Frederik stood up, too) and I said:

«Listen, General! What you have dared to say is the culmination of your treachery and villainy. However, you should know that we shall not surrender and don't think that we have lost the war. We have treated you as allies, but apparently you do not want those who fight fascism as allies. We shall continue our war to total victory. You will have to answer for the betrayal you are committing against our people's war. You are deserting under fire and you know what awaits deserters in the army. Apart from anything else they are called traitors. What you're about to do is deserting under fire, betrayal.

«Who has lost the war? Who should surrender, we? Never! You General are a defeatist,

a capitulationist. The Albanian partisans have not lost any war and will not do so. We crushed the Italians and brought them to their knees without the aid of anyone else. Likewise, we are attacking the Germans ceaselessly and we shall crush them and bring them to their knees without the aid of anyone else. Should the Albanian surrender to the enemy? This has not happened and never will happen. We have smashed all the enemy offensives. The attacks against us have ended with losses for the enemies and victories for us. Do you think, General, that the partisans are in despair because they have to stay in the forests? You are wrong. Our whole existence has been ceaseless war against the enemy. We attack the cities, the roads, blow up the bridges and depots, kill the soldiers of the occupiers and their agents. We are masters of these mountains and these forests and also of houses within the cities. And you advise us to surrender because we have allegedly lost the war?! Surrender is an act unworthy of an army which has never surrendered to the Germans. This is an insult to us, General. The Albanian will never tolerate insults. Excuse me, but it seems to me that you have lost your sense of logic»

The General looked crest-fallen. He stood up, told Frederik to tell me that he begged my pardon and had not intended to insult us and went

off to rejoin his group with a nod of his head to me. I returned his nod equally coldly.

I gathered up the comrades and related to them what had happened. «He got what he deserved,» they all said unanimously.

We set out again. The General and his suite followed a little behind us.

Heavy snow continued to fall. It was bitterly cold. The north wind was like a whiplash on our faces. We made slow progress. In the middle of the forest we made a longer stop under the shelter of a tree. As was his custom, Koleka sliced up a loaf and gave each of us a slice of bread and an onion. We ate the food and started out again. The snow was falling so thickly that we could not find the path to Studa Flat. We wandered for hours in the forest and suddenly found ourselves back in the place where we had stopped to eat, because we saw the onion skins. Our «guide», who had beaten his breast boasting that he knew «every inch» of the terrain, had lost his bearings, but as usual he tried to avoid admitting it. Then we took the situation in hand ourselves and, using a map and a compass, after many wearisome efforts at last managed to find our bearings. In the end we struck the right road, but the snow continued relentlessly. Night overtook us before we reached Studa Flat. We had been on the march for more than ten hours. We crossed the flat and began to climb the moun-

tain on the far side. It was hard going. We stopped.

All the food that remained was one loaf of maize bread and two tins of Nestle milk. With great difficulty the partisans lit a fire which was the saving of us, put on the dixy, melted snow in it and tipped in the milk. While they were mixing it the orderly of the General, who was used to eating chocolate and biscuits, but now had nothing left, came and said:

«Please, could you give me a ration for the General?»

«Of course,» one of the comrades told him and filled a flask with milk and gave him two good slices of maize bread to take to the General.

We spent that night on the mountain. When day dawned we could see Okshtun ahead of us. Only then did we realize that we were on Okshtun Mountain.

In the morning the General came. We shook hands and I smiled at him as if I had forgotten the quarrel of the day before. We set out for Okshtun. The snow was frozen hard and both climbing and descending the slopes was difficult. The north wind continued.

«We are almost there, General,» I said to give him courage. «We are almost there. Just a little more patience and don't lose your good spirits.»

Our bases in Okshtun had been informed and they were expecting us, and indeed, when they saw that we were delayed, they sent out some people who met our partisan vanguard.

Night had fallen by the time we reached the base where we were to stay and our hosts had come out in the snow in the darkness to welcome us. They embraced us and took us inside. We took off our dripping coats and handed our rifles to the head of the house, who hung them on the wall, one beside the other. The small ante-room was warm. A great sense of satisfaction stole over us. The General watched with pleasure and curiosity how we embraced the people of the house, how we handed over our rifles, took off our boots and shoes at the entrance to the room, and he did his best to follow suit.

Our host opened the door of the big room with the fire-place and invited us in.

«Please, come in, my home is yours.»

«You go first,» I said, giving the General the honour. We entered the room. It was truly a miracle, not only for the British General, but also for us, who were the sons of this land and this people. After such a wearying journey through the forest, sometimes on and sometimes off the track, through snow and blizzard, we entered a room of a peasant's home which made

the Englishman exclaim: «What a miracle! Can 1 be dreaming?»

Our host asked me where the General was from and what language he spoke. I introduced the General to him.

At the head of the room there was a big fire-place, with a blazing fire which spread warmth and light from end to end. Two or three kerosene lamps had been lit and at the one end of the room, snow-white sheep-skin rugs had been laid out, with pillows in clean pillow-slips to rest on. In the middle of the room was a big Dibra carpet, while corncobs in regular rows like soldiers were hanging from the rafters overhead. Neither beams nor roof could be seen, only the corncobs glowing like gold in the light of the fire.

«This is marvellous! This is paradise!» murmured the General. «Even in dreams I could not have imagined such a Christmas night.»

«You see what the homes and hearts of the ordinary Albanians are like, General,» I said. «They truly are paradise without Mammon or God, as in your Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Perhaps you remember Lord Byron's beautiful verses full of feeling. In his *Childe Harold* he pointed out the fine virtues of the Albanian and wrote: The Suliotes stretched the welcome hand,/ And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,/

And filled the bowl, and trimmed the cheerful lamp, / And spread their fare; though homely all they had. / Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp, /

«Yes, Mr. Hoxha, said the General, «what Byron wrote about you Albanians I am seeing in reality and in difficult times which the world is going through.

«General,» I said, «this hospitable atmosphere which our host has created reminds me of what I have read about the life of Byron. It was in such an atmosphere that the great English poet who had gone to Greece to fight for the freedom of the Greek people lay on his death bed. When the Albanians and their valiant leaders — Marko Boçari, Kolokotroni and others, were fighting all around Missolonghi, those who were serving the poet on his death bed were Albanians — the Suliotes.»

«In find your words very moving, Mr. Hoxha,» the British General replied.

«Byron has written about this generosity and hospitality of our people, too. Somewhere he relates how, while he was travelling in Albania and night overtook him in a village, he was obliged to seek shelter in a house where he was welcomed with all the good things they had. Before he left the next day, Byron brought out his money to pay. His host said indignantly: 'No, the

Albanian does not want money but friends.' And Byron remained a true friend of the Albanians.»

Our host loaded the table with food, as is the custom of the people of Dibra. The General rose to his knees, put his hand on his heart to express thanks whenever his host offered him cigarettes, or clinked glasses with him. Our weariness disappeared immediately. The General opened his eyes in astonishment and asked me:

«I cannot understand where we are here, in the city or in the countryside?»

«We're in a village, the inhabitants of which have fought for freedom since ancient times. They are poor, but when friends and comrades come they do everything possible to avoid being disgraced. This is how our whole people preserve the traditions of our ancestors, General,» I told him.

«What an astonishing culture you have! What politeness!» exclaimed the General.

Hearing the General saying these words reminded me of another incident that had occurred during those difficult days, about which the comrades had told me in detail. As I have mentioned, we had been obliged to spend the night in the forest of Okshtun. Everything was covered with snow. We could find no dry wood anywhere in the forest. With difficulty we

managed to light the fire by tearing strips from our shirts. A little way off, the General's group lit another fire. What had occurred? One of our guides had approached the Englishmen's fire to warm himself. Colonel Nicholls, displaying his miserable spirit, had not permitted this and had driven him away with most insulting words.

Thus, on that cold winter's night in that house in Dibra, for a few moments we forgot the great difficulties of the war, talking about literature, poetry and poets, and the lessons of history.

The following day, while we were at the table, our dear comrade, the fighter and writer Haki Stërmilli, came to see us, dressed in old clothes, looking exactly like a peasant. I introduced him to the General.

«You see this man? He is a writer. He has left his home, his family and his comfort and thrown himself into the war. He is not a communist, but a great patriot and revolutionary democrat. After the overthrow of the bourgeois-democratic government of Fan Noli in 1924 by the reactionary forces of Zog, Haki Stërmilli was obliged to leave his Homeland and wander through Europe as a political emigrant. In Yugoslavia the police arrested him and handed him over to Zog who imprisoned him. He has described his life in prison, the sufferings and tor-

tures there, in his diary *The Prison*. Later, he wrote a novel which made a big impression, called *If I Were a Boy*, about the double oppression in the family and society, and the emancipation of the Albanian women who, as you have seen, have taken up arms today and are fighting valiantly shoulder to shoulder with men. This comrade fully embraced the decisions of the Conference of Peza and now he is a member of the National Liberation General Council, the organizer of the liberation war in this zone. He goes from village to village, speaks to the peasants, explains the importance of our war, and organizes them, and the peasants, inspired by the ideal of defending the Homeland, hurl themselves into the fight against the Germans. The nazis, together with the heads of reaction in Dibra, pursue him, but they cannot capture him, because he is closely linked with the people, with the communists. We love each other as comrades and brothers.»

We passed the time very well with Haki. He talked to the General about the dreadful life in which the feudal lords, the gentry and religion kept the people, told him about the bloodthirsty regime of Zog, and gave him a short account of his novel *If I Were a Boy*.

Our stay in Okshtun was really pleasant. The hospitality and the patriotism of the people

of Dibra drove away our great fatigue and for a few moments we forgot the great problems of the war. We had a good sleep and a thorough rest. But according to the reports which I received, the German offensive, supported by the mercenaries of Fiqri Dine and other bajraktars, was continuing. To stay longer there was dangerous. Therefore, we decided to go to Kostenja. I met the British General and told him we would climb up to some houses at Kostenja where we would be more secure, could rest and would certainly soon find the way to carry on with our plan.

Thus, we returned to the sheepfolds of Kostenja. We settled the General and his staff in a separate house, while we stayed in the home of Qazim Peshku, a company commander in the çeta of Martanesh. There we stayed some days, rested and regained our strength. The General now had no cause for complaint about the food. Our base area supplied him well with walnuts, potatoes, quinces, grape conserve, meat and raki.

We made contact with the party organization and our forces at Shmil, Labinot, etc., and learned that the operation had ended with no success for the Germans. I instructed the comrades of the Party to notify the 1st Brigade to cross to Letëm, Kostenja, Martanesh, Orenja and Shmil, to mop up the Germans and Ballists

in these zones and meet up with the General Staff. I decided we should go from Kostenja to Shmil and from there find some corridor in the direction of the zone of Korça.

I informed the General about this project and asked him whether he wanted to continue the journey with us, because if not, we would find some secure place for him from which he could move in the direction of the region of Korça when he wanted to. He replied that he would think about this and inform me later.

During this time Comrade Sami Baholli and other comrades of the Party in those areas prepared bases for all of us in Shmil from which the new itinerary for our journey would start. Sami informed us that everything was ready.

After we had completed all our preparations for the march, through the snow and winter blizzard, I went to the house where the General was staying. I sat down. He offered me a cigarette and I talked to him about the plan. He was worried, kept looking at the Colonel and seemed as if he wanted his permission.

«Let the Colonel decide,» he said. The Colonel was sitting on a stool.

I said with a laugh, «Whether or not the Colonel likes the idea...» And I reached over to where he was sitting and slapped him on the

knee. I could not finish my sentence, because he gave a loud cry followed by a deep groan.

«Excuse me,» I said. «Did I hurt you? What's the matter?»

«I am very ill, Mr. Hoxha,» he said. «I can't move. I am afraid my leg is becoming gangrenous.»

«What? How is it possible, Colonel?» I said in surprise. «Why didn't you inform me earlier, so that we could take urgent measures? General, we must save the Colonel's life. Have we your permission to act?»

«Do you have any possibilities?» he asked me.

«Dr. Dishnica must see him in the first place, and then I think we must transfer him as quickly as possible to Tirana. We have our doctors there,» I replied.

«But is this possible?» asked the General in astonishment.

«We can get him to Tirana within a few days and the operation can be done immediately,» I said.

After consulting with Nicholls, the General told me they would be grateful if we could get this underway quickly and expressed the desire that Nicholls should be sheltered in the home of one of their men, a bey of Jella, if I am not mistaken.

«Wherever you like,» I replied, and without

delay sent couriers urgently to instruct the comrades of Mat and Tirana to organize a refuge for the Colonel and the operation on him as quickly as possible. The General thanked me for our concern and the speed with which we were acting to save the Colonel and said that in these conditions he could not leave the vicinity of Tirana until the Colonel was better.

«That is understandable,» I said. «Then you shall stay with Baba Faja. He is on the way here if he hasn't come already, and you will stay with him and his forces here, or perhaps in some other nearby zone.»

Baba Faja came and met the General. We said goodbye. I shook the General by the hand saying: «I'll see you again in the zone of Korça,» but we never met again.

During those days a British Lieutenant called Tray horn had surrendered to the Germans. It seems he had told them everything about the General, where he was staying and his plans. On the day after we left, January 8, the Ballists of Azis Biçaku and a platoon of German soldiers moved in on the sheepfolds of Kostenja, where the partisans with the British General and four other people were located. The partisans, led by Baba Faja, began to fight off the attacks from the four sides. Baba Faja led the fighting, directing the attacks on the enemy in order to break through the encirclement and enter a

nearby forest and at the same time protected and opened the way for the General. Shouting, «Take care of the General!» Baba Faja continued to fight in the vanguard to cover their withdrawal. Nicholls and another British officer also fought together with the partisans to break through the encirclement. In the heat of the battle the partisans saw that the General was not moving. Some of them went back to get him, but to their astonishment saw that he was leaning against the trunk of a tree with a red silk sash draped across his chest and shouting and gesturing to them to go away. Meanwhile Frederik, while fighting alongside Nicholls, heard the General say to the Colonel:

«Go on, I am hit. You take charge!»

«*Very good, sir, goodbye!*» replied the Colonel.

A number of Ballists and Germans were killed and the firing stopped. The enemy withdrew. After the battle, the partisans discovered that the British General was missing. Exhausted, completely discouraged, he had thrown away his weapons and surrendered without firing a shot.

The report about the event reached me at Shmil, when we had made all the preparations for our journey and were almost ready to start for the Korça zone. The General who had ad-

vised us to surrender had long been planning to surrender himself. Thus, he found the moment and made his plan a reality.

Despite his injured leg, the Colonel did not surrender, but broke through the encirclement and entered the forest, because he knew what awaited a senior officer of the SOE at the hands of the Gestapo. The General himself had expressed this to Frederik in the course of conversation. There was also another reason why he did not surrender. According to a tradition in the British army, if a senior officer is captured, his immediate subordinate takes his position. Hence, Nicholls would automatically become a General and head of the British mission in Albania, and, in fact, did so. However, this was only for a few days. With his leg gangrenous, he broke off all contact with the representative of the Staff of our National Liberation Army and, through the intervention of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti, he found shelter in the vicinity of Tirana in the home of one of the Toptani family, a Ballist and Anglophile. As we learned later, he died there and was buried incognito.

The Ballists displayed all this care for the Colonel in atonement for the sin they had committed against the British, by handing over General Davies to the Germans. Nevertheless,

the British did not publicly condemn the Ballists, because they did not want to totally discredit them and they continued their contacts with them. However, the Germans brought his whole filthy business to light. In order to show that the Ballists were with them, they publicized the capture of the General by the Ballists, and for this they awarded Aziz Biçaku the Iron Cross.

Later, when I was in the South, I was informed that the comrades of Tirana had made an attempt to release the British General from the clutches of the Gestapo, but had failed, although four people had sacrificed their lives in the attempt.

In September 1944, the Command of the 1st Army Corps of the National Liberation Army informed me that the partisans had captured three German women, dangerous spies, on the Kukës-Prizren road. I sent an urgent radiogram, ordering the comrades to try to exhange them for General Davies. However, the German Command replied that when they asked General Davies whether he wanted to be exchanged he had not accepted the proposal.

We did our duty towards him, but the British General Davies preferred German imprisonment to freedom with the partisans in the mountains of Albania, where he would have had

to share the countless sacrifices(**1**)they endured.

This was the shameful end of a senior British officer, the agent of the Intelligence Service, General Davies.

Without doubt, the British General, prisoner of the Germans, who refused to be released on exchange as we proposed, had been ordered by London to enter into discussions with the Germans about the future of Albania over which London was so concerned. I have presented facts about this concern throughout my description of the events.

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1 In his book *Illyrian Venture* Davies admits that in the German prisoner of war camp, «It was a better Christmas than the last, when we were struggling against a blizzard on top of a mountain, with no food and no prospects.» (Brigadier «Trotsky» Davies, *Illyrian Venture*. The Bodley Head, London 1952, p. 219.)

IV

MUSTAFA GJINISHI — AGENT OF THE BRITISH

The two Mustafas. Kaçaçi — loyal son of the Party. Gjinishi's links and contacts with the «nationalists». Babë Myslim's reply. The «plan» for the Peqin-Darsia military domain. A «valuable» proposal: «Let us send representatives to London.» The BBC — Ras Tafari. Tafari's confession: «Cungu put me in contact with the Turkish consulate.» Caught red-handed.

I had not known Mustafa Gjinishi, nor even heard his name, I knew nothing at all about who he was, what work he did, where he lived and what he had been doing before the occupation of Albania by Italy. I had heard of his father who had a good reputation. He had been a democrat, a supporter of Fan Noli, against the beys, against Vërlaci and Zog and had been assassinated by them. He was a friend of Myslim and Shyqri Peza who were enemies of the Vërlacis and other beys, and had always been persecuted

and were sometimes in prison, sometimes fugitives and sometimes obliged to live in exile in Yugoslavia. I did not even know that this democrat, who had been persecuted and assassinated by Vërlaci's men, had a son called Mustafa who, it seems, had attended the American Technical School in Tirana.

After the occupation of our country by the Italians, Mustafa entered Albania from Yugoslavia together with Mustafa Kaçaçi and Abaz Kupi. Of course, they entered the country illegally, crossing the border in Dibra, if I'm not mistaken. They made contact with Haxhi Lleshi, who was in the underground movement, and came to Tirana secretly. Mustafa Gjinishi made contact with Myslim Peza who was pursued by the Italians and had also gone underground.

I had never met Mustafa Kaçaçi, either, but I knew his name and something of his struggle against the regime of Zog. Kaçaçi had been one of the leaders of the Fier uprising in 1935. He was sentenced to death as an anti-Zogite democrat, but maintained a very good stand before the court. Later his death sentence was commuted and after a period of imprisonment he was released and fled to Yugoslavia with the aid of friends and comrades. In exile he sympathized with communism and called himself a communist. Gjinishi, likewise, claimed to be «a communist».

After some time we met the two Mustafas. The Party had not been formed at this time and I made contact with these two on behalf of the Korça Group. I was still legal at that time.

At the first meeting I had with these two comrades, we talked about the situation in the country and the war which we had to organize against the occupiers. I told them briefly, without going into detail (and especially without talking about the organization of our Korça Group), about the disagreements between the communist groups. I explained to them the mistaken views of the other groups, while, of course, pointing out that the line of our group was correct, was truly a communist line, that our group was linked with the Comintern, etc., etc.

«We are for war against the occupier,» I told them.

«We are for war, too,» they said. «We have come here to fight and want to link up with your Group.»

Of course, I was pleased at this and agreed that they should make contact with the leaders of other groups and try to persuade them to reach agreement. They promised, but did nothing.

I met Kaçaçi several times. He reported to me on his activities and finally told me:

«Listen, Enver. With Qorri (Anastas Lula)

nothing can be done. Therefore, allocate me my work, the cell I am to belong to and my contact. Bear in mind my game leg, because I cannot run and might be spotted.»

Kaçaçi was very good as a person and as a communist. He was sincere, joined the Korça Group and, when the Party was founded, became a member of it. Later he was appointed political commissar of the partisan battalion of Mat and fought and gave leadership as a resolute communist until the moment he was killed, fighting heroically for the liberation of Kruja. After Liberation the Party awarded him the lofty title Hero of the People.

Matters were totally different with Mustafa Gjinishi, let alone with Hasan Reçi, although the latter, too, posed as a communist, but we never trusted him. He was a charlatan, a liar, a very dubious individual. Time proved this completely. He was an agent in the service of the Anglo-Americans, and after Liberation he was exposed and condemned.

But let us return to Mustafa Gjinishi. He was a clever, dynamic, active fellow, but conceited, wary with us and insincere. He spoke with gestures as though to give himself authority. He wanted to show that he had links and great influence with Myslim Peza, as well as with many circles of «nationalists» and anti-fascists, and gave the impression that his words and advice

were listened to in those circles. He told us nothing concrete. Where and who these «bases and supporters» of his were, we discovered later.

Allegedly illegal, he went all over Tirana wearing dark glasses and a blue suit, sometimes with a felt hat, sometimes wearing plus-fours and a cap and a white gabardine coat, and carrying a black satchel containing papers, a Turkish revolver and two Yugoslav grenades. Our people reported that he went and met Irfan Ohri, Lumo Skëndo, Sheh Karbunara, Kamber Qafmolla, Abaz Kupi and others. He had meetings with a great mixture of people, including beys, some of whom had declared their links with the occupiers, others who had not done so at that time, and some other «candidates», «sympathizers» with the movement, some of them inveterate and resolute anti-communists. Mustafa told us very little about what he discussed, and what intrigues he hatched up with them, even later when the Party was formed, and indeed, even after we admitted him as a member of the Party.

Prior to the formation of the Party, we had managed to create a sort of liaison committee with the various groups for joint actions, and I remember that we summoned Mustafa Kaçaçi and Mustafa Gjinishi to a meeting of this «committee» at which Vasil Shanto, I and Anastas Lula were present. At this meeting I proposed

that we should come out in a demonstration in the streets of Tirana precisely on that day which later became known as the day of the big demonstration in Tirana, when we came to blows with the forces of the occupier in the Ministries' Square. Anastas pretended not to oppose the proposal for a demonstration but did not fail to invoke the «theory of cadres» and to say that «the enemy will discover us and attack us,» etc., and secretely fought to sabotage the proposal through Xhepi (Sadik Premte). Vasil, a brave proletarian comrade, who remained a resolute communist in the ranks of the Party from the time it was formed until he was killed in performing his duty, did not raise any opposition, but said, «I must consult my comrades», and quickly brought a positive reply. Mustafa Gjinishi began to indulge in rhetoric, demagogy and to obscure the issue, so that nothing would be decided. Then I asked Mustafa Gjinishi bluntly:

«Are you for or against demonstrations?»

«I support Vasil's view,» he said.

«But Vasil gave certain reasons,» I said. «He's going to ask his comrades. But what comrades are you going to ask? As far as I know and as you have said yourself, you are with our Group, and as such you ought to be disciplined.»

«No,» objected Mustafa Gjinishi indignantly, «I have the right to think outside the discipline

of the Group, because I have a series of nationalist friends who are assisting the war and we should not compromise them so soon. We need more preparation.»

«Then, Mustafa,» I said, «tell me straight, you are neither with us nor with Vasil. If Myslim Peza had listened to you, he would not have attacked the armies of the occupier. We'll come out in the demonstration and join our efforts with those of Myslim Peza, regardless of whether you or Xhepi like it or not.»

Mustafa Kaçaçi immediately associated himself with me and said to Gjinishi:

«Mustafa, don't get up to tricks like you did when we were in Yugoslavia. We've come here to fight those who have occupied the country.»

Gjinishi jumped to his feet, red-faced and angry and said to Kaçaçi:

«Don't insult me, I won't allow you to insult me. I am in favour but we must be careful not to become the target of attack. What do you mean with the tricks I got up to in Yugoslavia?»

I intervened to stop the conversation taking this turn and we parted.

The demonstration was held. Regardless of the fact that the heads of the «Youth» Group were against it, the rank-and-file of the three groups came out in the demonstration without

hesitation and fought the militia and the carabinieri of the occupier in the streets and squares.

A considerable time went by, filled with historic events, the main one of which was the founding of our Communist Party, our struggle to build and consolidate it, for its unity and to purge it of the spirit and old methods of work of the groups. The Party threw itself and its active forces heroically into the war, into actions, a thing which raised high its prestige among the people and built up their confidence in the Party. The unhealthy Trotskyite heads, such as Qorri, Xhepi and those of the «Zjarri» Group were being isolated step by step.

When the Party was formed, I summoned Mustafa Gjinishi to report on the work he had done, as the other members of the groups which formed the Party did.

«I know that as soon as you came here, you 'linked up' with the Korça Group, Mustafa, but now that the Party has been formed, since you call yourself a communist, you will understand that you must tell us the connections you have with various people and the work you have done with them, so that the Central Committee can make its judgement of this and of you, and about how you should act in the future, in other words, give you directives,» I told him.

He was in a tight spot, and I remember this reply:

«I am a communist, Comrade Enver, but you have not given me contacts, although I maintain contact with many comrades of the Party and work with them.»

«You are on a wrong course,» I told him, «and you must immediately break off your organizational links with other comrades, because we've finished with these methods of factional work once and for all. It's not true that you have been left without contact. Your contact is with me. I told you this a long time ago, but it has been to your liking to maintain contacts with everybody. The firm discipline and rules of the Party in these times of war do not permit such a thing.»

«You still want proofs of what I am?» he asked.

«I have summoned you precisely to discuss with you the work you have done so that we can know you better and the Central Committee can judge your work.»

He was obliged to say something, putting the emphasis on the fight of Myslim Peza with which we were very well acquainted. However, Mustafa wanted to escape rendering account to the Party, and at the same time tried to give us the impression that it was he who «guided» Myslim Peza and that, if we took a different view of the question of Mustafa, then the links of the Party with Myslim would be jeopardized!

The impression he gave me in this talk war

a bad one. Nevertheless, I had to proceed cautiously. It was essential to find out everything about the activity of Mustafa Gjinishi, and this would take time. At that period I had no suspicions that Mustafa Gjinishi was linked with foreigners, but a communist he was not. He was an ambitious nationalist, an adventurer and might become a source of danger to us on many counts, if we were not vigilant and did not keep a tight rein on his unorganized activities. We parted from that meeting in a relatively friendly fashion, but it was clear that neither he nor I was satisfied with each other and both of us understood this.

I had to continue to work with him patiently, not because of his threats that without him the links of the Party with Myslim Peza might be jeopardized, because these links were strong and sincere and we were going to strengthen them even more, but because we wanted to restrain him in his mistakes and his adventures and make him a good fighter for the cause of the liberation. To this end, we had to set about work together with Myslim Peza, so that we could become better acquainted with Mustafa. We could not underrate the tradition of family friendship between the Pezas and the Gjinishis and the sympathy of Myslim for Mustafa as the son of his friend, as an anti-Italian fighter and as a communist, which he pretended to be. Mustafa was a glib talker, gathered up and

spread around information from many quarters and might become a sort of «newspaper» or «source of news» for Myslim. This was what I was afraid of, but I had great faith in the strong character, the sense of justice and unpretentiousness of Myslim Peza. And I was not mistaken.

Let us return to Mustafa Gjinishi.

Naturally, it is not my object here to describe in detail his life and activity in the period of the National Liberation War, but only certain events and occurrences in which we ran into his hostile activity aimed against the Party and the people's national liberation state power.

One night, shortly after the formation of the Party, I summoned Mustafa Kaçaçi to a meeting in an underground base in Tirana. At that time we had both gone underground. I talked to him. I questioned him about Gjinishi and asked him to speak to me openly as a communist, pointing out sincerely that the Party was convinced that Gjinishi was an anti-fascist, a determined fighter against the occupiers.

«He makes great claims to be a communist, poses as a communist wherever he goes, to whoever he meets,» I said, «however, we are not convinced about this and must put him to further tests in order to admit him to the ranks of the Party. Gjinishi displays great lack of discipline in carrying out the rules and directives of the Party, does whatever he himself thinks fit, does

not report on the connections he has or about the work he does, and it frequently occurs that when we want to meet patriotic elements they say to us: 'There is no need because we have contact with Mustafa Gjinishi.' Can you tell me your opinion about these judgements of mine on the character and method of work of Mustafa Gjinishi,» I asked Kaçaçi, »because I may be wrong, while you are better acquainted with him and also knew him when you were abroad?»

In brief Kaçaçi told me:

«Overall, you are not mistaken. Gjinishi is active, capable of forming combinations, there is no doubt that he is anti-fascist and anti-Italian and wants to fight, but in his own way. This is what he did when we were in Yugoslavia, too. You could find him everywhere. He didn't stay much with us, but he met all those who were anti-Zogites, regardless of who they were, beys, aghas, Albanians or Yugoslav officials. He was informed about everything and had plenty of money, while we could hardly get by from month to month by borrowing from one another. One day he came to me and said that we were going to enter Albania together illegally, because the work against fascism there had begun.

«'How and from where are we going to go?' I asked him. 'Who is going to put us across the border?'

«'Don't worry,' he told me, 'I've reached

agreement with Gani Bey Kryeziu. His men will get us into Albania and there we shall find ways to meet Aqif Lleshi, Haxhi Lleshi and others. As for money, don't worry about that, because I've got some from the 'Committee' and some from Gani Bey'.

«'There's no one like you, Mustafa,' I said,» continued Kaçaçi, «'the main thing is that we must get to Albania and die there, in our own country, because abroad we're dying of boredom.' So we set out. I must tell you, Comrade Enver, that before we crossed the border, Gjinishi gave me a bag of gold napoleons which I was to keep in the saddle bag of my mule and when we got to the Homeland he took it from me saying, 'These will serve us to finance the war.' He will have told you this,» said Kaçaçi in conclusion.

«No,» I replied, «He must have forgotten or perhaps the occasion hasn't arisen!» But this aroused my suspicions. Mustafa Gjinishi had come from abroad with gold! Who had given it to him? What connections had he with the feudal Gani Bey Kryeziu, and who was behind them? Was it Serbian reaction or the British? Perhaps neither. «...and he had plenty of money, while we could hardly get by from month to month by borrowing...» Kaçaçi had told me. What should be done? I had to proceed cautiously and with great vigilancs, because Gjinishi was wily.

The fight of the Party and the people against the occupier and the quislings was becoming more and more fierce. It was extending in the capital and other cities. Myslim Peza's çeta was being strengthened with communists and enlarged with partisans from the city and the villages of Peza. Myslim, linked closely with the Party, stood heroically. When I went with him to different villages, Babë's words revealed his trust in the Party and his faith in communism. Peza had been turned into an important fighting centre for us and a great danger to the occupiers and the quisling Vërlaci.

Along with the fight against the occupiers and the traitors, the Party, through its members and others whom it appointed, also held talks and meetings with people known for their opposition to Zog in the past, with «nationalists», as we called them. We sounded them out about their political attitudes, their influence and circles, as well as about the possibilities of involving them in the struggle against the occupiers and uniting them with the Party in the war for the liberation of the country.

Although we still had not admitted Gjinishi to the Party, we had allocated him to this work for which he was allegedly suitable. Sometimes he reported and sometimes he did not report to us, but did not give up his tactics. He was resentful of the fact that Myslim, on whom he

had pinned great hopes, was firmly linked with the Party through me and Qemal Stafa. He saw that Babë liked us and that we had great love and respect for him, sought his opinion and kept him informed about everything, regardless of the fact that he was not yet a member of the Communist Party.

Gjinishi began to react against this connection: his visits to Peza became more frequent and more prolonged and he tried to confuse the comrades. They informed us about these things, but we advised them to be patient and to continue to watch out.

The contacts and meetings of Mustafa with the «nationalists» not only did not produce any concrete result, but also came into opposition with the ardent and pure patriotism of Myslim Peza. Myslim Peza was linked irrevocably with the poor peasants and hated the beys and swindlers. Many of these were the «nationalists» of Mustafa Gjinishi and Shyqri Peza. Mustafa and Shyqri got along well with them and wanted to take advantage of Myslim for their own purposes. In conversation, both of them talked about Irfan Ohri, Qazim Mulleti and the beys of Ndroq, whom Myslim detested. Mustafa was on intimate terms with Agë Petrela whose house in Tirana was his base. This agha had secret connections with the beys of Ndroq and other enemies of Myslim's.

All these actions and stands of Mustafa did

not increase but reduced Babë's trust in him. Here is one event amongst many others.

Qemal and I left Tirana secretly, because we were both illegal, and went to Peza, guided on the Tirana-Peza road by the partisan courier, the loyal peasant Murat Mëçalla. We went to the village of Durakja where Babë was staying. We were to talk with him about strengthening the leading role of the Party in the çeta, the reorganization of the çeta, the appointment of a political commissar, supplies of arms, clothing, etc. The three of us sat around the fire and we presented the problem. Myslim listened to us and said, «I agree with the Party, we should do what it says. Take the necessary measures as soon as you can.» It was getting dark. The day was fine but cold and the fire was very pleasant. From time to time Babë took a sip from the raki flask and handed it to us. We drank, too, although we were more interested in the pickled fried peppers than the raki.

We just finished our work when a partisan came and said:

«Babë, Shyqri has come with Mustafa Gjinishi.»

«Well, let them come in, what are they waiting for?» said Myslim.

«Perhaps we should go. You might have some business with them,» I said.

«No,» said Myslim, «I've no business which you must not know, therefore don't move.»

When they came in, we shook hands and Qemal and I sat down on one side of the fire beside Myslim.

It was clear from the expression on his face that Shyqri Peza was not pleased that we were there. Shyqri was as burly as Myslim was slim. He was an impressive figure with his broad face, long hair, wide shoulders and baggy trousers which made him look even bigger than he was. Shyqri was intelligent but quite the opposite of Myslim in character.

«Have you any news?» asked Myslim, addressing Shyqri who was toasting his hands at the fire.

«I came from Tirana, Myslim. In Peza e Vogël I met Mustafa and we came here together.»

«What's the news from Tirana?» Myslim asked again.

«Irfan Bey Ohri sends you his regards,» said Shyqri. «He had had a meeting with Qazim Mulleti. Qazim and Irfan want to meet you, in whatever place you decide, in order to speak openly, because neither Qazim nor Irfan want the Italians to attack and burn Peza, but on the condition that you don't molest the Italians.»

«And what did you say?» asked Myslim in a quiet voice.

Qemal and I were listening attentively.

«I could not give them any reply, but Mustafa and I think that it would not hurt if you met them,» Shyqri continued.

«We would not be surrendering our weapons,» added Mustafa.

At this Myslim rose angrily to his knees and said bluntly:

«You, Shyqri Peza, and you, Mustafa Gjinishi go and meet the traitors and talk with them if you wish, but never again set foot back here in the base of Myslim Peza. And tell them they can bring an army if they wish, but I shall fight them.»

I jumped up and embraced Myslim and afterwards Qemal did likewise.

We made Myslim sit down. Shyqri was sitting flabbergasted, while Mustafa hung his head.

«You must not do such a thing, Mr. Shyqri,» I said. «Babë Myslim and our Party will never accept it. We fully agree with Babë, but believe that you have not given this idea proper consideration. It is wrong, and we are convinced that you will abandon it. As for Mustafa, he ought to have advised you to refuse this proposal of traitors, without coming to Babë about it.»

To calm the situation I said to Babë Myslim:

«We must trust Shyqri Peza, who is our brother, that he will not make such mistakes again from now on and will never be split away from Babë.»

We summoned Mustafa separately later and criticized him severely. He made some sort of self-criticism and we thought that from now on he would come to his senses. He took part in several actions with the çeta of Peza against the Italians and accompanied Kajo in several dangerous actions to eliminate spies. In this direction Mustafa Gjinishi showed himself to be no coward.

From the political viewpoint Shyqri Peza, Myslim's brother, was vacillating and not as determined and militant as Babë Myslim, but his daughter and his son-in-law, Kajo Karafili, were linked with Babë, with the Party and the war. Thus, from that time on, Shyqri was never parted from Babë or us and followed Myslim loyally. When I went to Peza, he would come out to shake hands and exchange a few words with me. When we organized the Conference of Peza, Shyqri, of course, did not participate in it, but he stayed in Peza, out of the way, without interfering. In one break during the meeting, he came out of his house, shook hands with us and sat down on a chair near me. He could have sat near Bazi i Canës, but he did not do so out of respect for and solidarity with Myslim in the eyes of strangers. I thought that at least we had neutralized him. I asked him:

«What do you think, Shyqri Peza, about what we are doing?»

He looked me in the eye and said:

«As long as Myslim agrees with it, I am with Myslim.»

«Thank you, Shyqri Peza,» I said, «because the war against the Italian occupier needs the support of every true Albanian.»

Shyqri Peza was killed in an exchange of fire which the battalion of Peza had with the Italian occupiers.

Mustafa Gjinishi was continually asking the comrades and me to put him into the Party. The comrades said to him: «You have to get the approval of Enver with whom you have contact, because he alone can make the recommendation.» However, I hesitated.

«Mustafa,» I said to him one day, «you have positive aspects, but you also have many negative aspects, which I have continually pointed out to you, as a comrade. The Party wants modest, sincere, disciplined people. If you give me your word that you will correct yourself. I shall give you my recommendation.» He said that he would do so and promised that he would keep his word.

Thus, Mustafa Gjinishi was admitted as a party member in the organization of Peza.

After having secured admission to the Party, Mustafa Gjinishi set to work to climb in its leadership! Here and there he expressed his discontent that he was not in the Central Committee or the

regional committee. He whispered to others: «Why can only workers get into the committee and not intellectuals?» To win over the nationalists and incite dissatisfaction with the Party amongst them, he criticized the proclamations which we distributed, because allegedly they contained insufficient nationalism!

These and other activities of Mustafa Gjinishi were attacked at the 1st Consultative Conference with party activists (April 12-14, 1942).

Major events were taking place. The historic Conference of Peza, at which the political and organizational foundations of the unity of the Albanian people in the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front and the people's state power were laid, had been held. The National Liberation War was extending. Peza was attacked. Just two days before the fascists attacked it, Mustafa and I left Peza for Tirana with several bags of leaflets. We stopped at an old inn, which was a base of ours, where we left the leaflets and got away very quickly, because I saw some movements in our direction from the nearby Italian barracks. The inn was raided, the leaflets captured, and the inn-keeper arrested.

Nako Spiru and some other comrades had set out from Peza in the direction of Durrës. On the way, they ran into the Italian troops who were marching towards Peza and were arrested.

About two months later, the Balli Kombëtar was formed as reaction opposed to the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, an organization of reactionaries, of pseudo-democrats, of so-called liberal beys and aghas, who had fed from every trough in the past and who, some openly, some indirectly for the time being, were linked with the Italian occupiers and the quislings in power, headed by Mustafa Kruja. The Balli Kombëtar openly publicized its program against the Communist Party of Albania and against the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front, which it described as «a cloak for the Communist Party». The heads of this organization issued their «Decalogue» which circulated freely. It advocated war against the National Liberation War and armed actions. Nevertheless, our National Liberation War against the occupier had surged up vigorously all over the country. The Communist Party had become the inspirer and the banner-bearer of liberation.

The spring of 1943 arrived and, together with it, the first British military missions began to come to Albania.

With the arrival of the British missions, Mustafa Gjinishi was strutting like a fighting cock, although both he and the British kept up appearances. Mustafa, that «cheerful, interesting and frank person», as the British described him, had the advantage that he knew English. Even

when some of us who knew French but not English, were present, Mustafa was able to speak freely with them, or to translate as he wished. I did not like this, but there was nothing we could do about it. We tried to see if there was any connection between some meetings of the British with «nationalist» personalities and the meetings which Mustafa had had previously with these individuals, who were now openly with the Balli Kombëtar, but we were still unable to find the connecting thread in this tangle.

With aid of the British, a kind of French government, called «the Committee of Free France» headed by De Gaulle, had been created in London; the «government» of King Peter, the king of Yugoslavia without a kingdom, who had fled the country before the German attack, the Dutch «government», the Belgian «government» and others also had their «seats» there. The «government» in exile of King Paul of Greece was also under the wing of the British. London, together with the Albanian reactionaries and traitors, also tried to create a royal government for Albania within the country or abroad. Apparently it had its attention focussed on the restoration of the monarchy because it thought that the Albanian people were «longing» for this and for the hangman Zog.

The British Intelligence Service was carrying these cartridges in its bandolier against the

peoples who were fighting. Therefore we had to be very vigilant towards the manoeuvres of the British.

Despite their efforts they were unable to create a government in exile headed by Zog. The fierce, far-sighted, resolute and uncompromising fight of our Party inflicted this defeat on them. This was the main factor.

Besides this there was the Greek question. The Greek government in exile claimed Southern Albania and did not recognize the status quo of Albania before the occupation. It would consider the creation of a royal Albanian government in exile an attack of the British government against this claim.(**1**)At that time Britain had relatively greater interest in Greece than in Albania. This did not mean it had finally given up hope of using Zog(**2**)for its plans.

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1 In connection with the recognition of a government in exile headed by Zog, a Foreign Office document, No. E 48 says that «It would certainly do considerable harm to our relations with the Greek Government.» *(FO 371/37138-3690. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original found in the AIH, Tirana.)*

2 On August 9, 1944, A. Dew of the Foreign Office wrote to the Secretary of the Anglo-Albanian Association among other things:

«2. The suggestion that an Albanian Government in exile should be recognised has been kept constantly under review, but it is not felt that the appropriate moment for this step has yet arrived.»

(FO 371/43555-3278. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original found in the AIH, Tirana.)

Such manoeuvres of the British to create a government in exile and to re-establish the regime of Zog against the will of the people were very dangerous. Such a people, who had a history full of sufferings, a people hardened to want and difficulties, under the leadership of the Communist Party, would know how to defend their rights against whoever might dare to engage in trickery at their expense, would be capable of establishing their own form of government, which would ensure all the freedoms and democratic rights for them.

Had we made one small mistake in this direction, we would have jeopardized everything just as the Yugoslav Communist Party, the French Communist Party, the Greek Communist Party and many other communist parties jeopardized and lost everything. The British had Ahmet Zog, Abaz Kupi or the Kryezius ready. But our Party showed exemplary determination, vigilance and Marxist-Leninist political maturity, loyalty to the people and to its ideology, Marxism-Leninism. No concession was made to them and their plans were smashed to smithereens.

In one meeting which I had with the head of the British mission, General Davies, I had Mustafa with me, to serve also as interpreter on this occasion.

When we were returning through the forest to our base, on the way Mustafa said to me:

«We are waging a heroic war, full of sacrifices, and nobody abroad hears about it, while the Yugoslavs have a special station of their own which broadcasts, of course, from Moscow.»

«There's nothing we can do about this, Gjinishi,» I said. «In this direction only Moscow can talk about us, but we have no Soviet mission here. Nevertheless, we shall continue the war and eventually the world will learn what a great fight our people, led by the Party, have put up.»

«That is so,» said Gjinishi. «These British we have here aren't helping us. Perhaps they have orders, but maybe they are just dull-witted and lacking initiative. They don't understand the great importance of Albania in the Balkans. We ought to find the way to interest the government of our British allies in our war.»

This alerted all my senses.

«I am a bit tired, Mustafa,» I said. «Let's sit down and have a cigarette.» And we lit up.

«How could we interest the British government? Have you thought about this?» I continued the conversation.

«We should send one or two comrades to London on behalf of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Front,» he replied, «to put forward our views there, our requests for arms, for aid, for propaganda only about our National Liberation War, and for the exposure of the Balli Kombëtar and the quislings, because we are getting no-

where with these people of the British mission and merely quarrelling all the time.»

In order to discover more of Mustafa's plan I continued:

«It would be difficult. These people of the British mission have presented us to their superiors as savage enemies of the British. I don't think it can be done.»

«If we demand it,» continued Mustafa, «these people are obliged to present our requests. Let's try it, what have we to lose?»

Mustafa Gjinishi was quite shameless! I understood this at the time he proposed to Myslim Peza that he should meet and talk with Qazim Mulleti and Irfan Ohri. Now he was proposing that we should send a delegation to London.

«No, Mustafa, we must not do such a thing. I don't agree with this idea,» I said, in order to avoid putting him on his guard. «Forget about it, because it would do us no good.»

«Very well,» said Mustafa. «but discuss it with the comrades in any case.»

When I met the comrades I informed them how Mustafa had fallen into the trap and related what had happened:

«The scoundrel! An agent of the Intelligence Service,» exclaimed one of the comrades, and in fact, he was not mistaken.

«Patience,» I advised. «We must not be hasty. We must watch him and get further proof.»

«You are still like Saint Thomas,» the comrade said to me.

«When I say that, I am not concerned about him personally,» I replied, «but I think we still need proof and facts to convince the circle of people around him, to whom we must make it clear what sort of a person he is. Don't worry,» I told the comrades. «Despite our continual advice he will not abandon his dangerous course. We'll be here and we shall see the results of his work again.»

Who knows how many times other matters cropped up in connection with him.

Once, I don't remember where, Mustafa had just come from Peza and I summoned him to report to me. Amongst other things he said:

«I have a proposal which I think is important for the further development of the war in Central Albania.»

«Make the proposal,» I said, «we shall study it.»

«Well,» he said, «I've been working for some time since we last met to organize up to two shock brigades and have achieved satisfactory results in the region of Darsia. I've also been in some villages across the Shkumbin, on the Çerma side. If you'll sign the order, I shall go and raise these brigades, but there's something else I want from you: I want you to give me Kajo Karafili as commander for one brigade, while for the

other we should propose a local comrade. Thus, I, Kajo and the other commander to be appointed, will cover a whole zone and will attack the roads and many military objects there.»

«To whom will they be subordinate?» I asked.

«Directly to the General Staff, to you,» he replied. «I shall lead the actions and apply the orders as a member of the General Staff.»

«What becomes of Myslim in this plan?» I asked, because to me Mustafa's aim was quite clear: to separate himself from the command of the fighting zone of Peza, hence from the leadership of Babë, and to form a separate zone by creating brigades under his leadership.

«We shall maintain close links with Babë, co-operate with him and co-ordinate our actions,» he answered.

«Have you discussed this plan with Babë Myslim?» I asked him.

The cunning Mustafa blushed and replied: «No, I've not discussed it yet. I thought we should discuss it and reach agreement first and then inform him.»

«You haven't acted well,» I said. «Not only should you have informed Myslim from the moment you began this work, but you should have received his consent before coming to me. I cannot agree with you, not about setting up two brigades, because I agree that we should organize

them as soon as possible, but over the creation of another fighting zone, alongside that of Peza, at a time when the zone of Peza extends to the zone where you propose a new one and where the influence of Myslim is great. This is neither advisable nor correct. As for Kajo Karafili, I cannot give him to you. He is one of Babë's outstanding commanders. Myslim can never permit the removal of Kajo from Peza.

«In conclusion», I told Mustafa, «first, you must go and talk to Babë and report that there's the possibility, and prove it, that two brigades can be set up, which will operate under the leadership of Myslim Peza. As for the creation of another fighting zone and all the other things you proposed to me, they are not accepted.»

Mustafa did not say anything to Myslim about this event and nor were the separate brigades formed, because the partisans of the region of Peqin and Darsia had been already incorporated in the partisan force of Peza and Dumre and some of them in the battalions of Lushnja. Mustafa Gjinishi, with his inclinations to be a big shot, wanted to create his own military domain of Peqin-Darsia.

At a subsequent meeting in Labinot of Elbasan, at which several members of the General Staff had gathered to re-examine the political-military situation and to take further measures

in regard to the fighting, Myslim took me aside and said:

Comrade Enver, the General Staff has promised me aid in money to buy some weapons, ammunition and reserve clothing for winter, because we need them badly, but up till now we have received nothing. Please look into this matter, although I know how hard-pressed you are and what other great needs our army has, which you have to cope with.»

«I'm astonished at what you are telling me, Babë,» I said. «It's only two months since I sent you the two hundred napoleons which were promised to Peza, through Mustafa Gjinishi.»

«I tell you I haven't received a penny,» said Myslim.

«Tell Mustafa Gjinishi to come here,» I told a partisan, and Mustafa came with that self-confident walk, his face smooth-shaven and powdered.

«Sit down, my friend!» Myslim said to him.

«Mustafa,» I said, «I gave you two hundred napoleons for Myslim. Why have you not handed them over? What have you done with them?»

The fellow tried to brazen it out as usual, he began to justify himself.

«Yes, Babë, it's true, I took the two hundred napoleons, but I did not hand it over, because

knowing the needs of Peza...» (And he related how he had «distributed» it, saying that he gave so much to «Hasan», so much to «Hysen», so much to «Sefer», to buy this, that and the other thing.)

This was more than what Myslim could tolerate and he shouted:

«Stop beating about the bush, Mustafa, don't try to put me off with these excuses. The money was handed to you for me and you should have come and given it to me. How I was going to spend it, who I was to charge with this, this I would have arranged myself, but you didn't even inform me and that is not honest. As soon as I get back to Peza, either the weapons must come, or you must return the money.»

These were the sort of things Mustafa Gjinishi did. But other even more dangerous actions of his were to come and these would fill the cup.

Every evening London broadcast messages over the BBC for the whole network of agents of the British Intelligence Service, stationed in Europe and other continents where fighting was going on. One night it began to broadcast messages for Albania, too. These incomprehensible messages were given periodically. Naturally, they were understandable only by those who expected them. They spoke about «the fruits which are

ripening» and other things which I hardly remember now. For us the important thing was to discover to whom these messages were addressed and then to try to find out the content. It was difficult. When the members of the British mission were asked directly or indirectly, of course, they maintained a graveyard silence. We had grave suspicions that the messages might be addressed to the Ballists.

One night, when several comrades and I were listening to the BBC, it gave another message for Albania. This time, if I am not mistaken, the message spoke about the figs or wild cherries which were «ripening». The message was addressed to Tafari. I sprang to my feet.

«What's wrong?» said the comrades.

«Tafari is Mustafa Gjinishi,» I said.

«Is that a guess?» they asked me.

«No,» I replied and went on to tell them about something that had happened in the past.

Shortly after we had formed the Party and were working to strengthen it organizationally, we saw that Anastas Lula and Sadik Premte were continuing their factional work within the Party and their sabotage among progressive elements close to the Party. Because of this we held the Extraordinary Party Conference in which we put these two in the dock and eliminated the «abscess», as is well known. We had called Mustafa

Gjinishi to attend this meeting, too, because he was not without involvement, although Qorri and Xhepi were the problem.

It was a long meeting in the home of Zeqi Agolli. We were all illegal. However, it was not easy to get the truth out of Qorri and Xhepi. Almost stupified by the thick fog of tobacco smoke we were obliged to take repeated breaks to rest in the other room where, besides drinking coffee, we continued to smoke tobacco.

During one of these breaks, Qorri had sat down near me, hanging his head with his face like a cobra and smoking in silence. Mustafa came in, stood in front of Anastas and said to him:

«Qorri, tell us what you have to tell, because you are making us tired.»

Anastas raised his head, looked Gjinishi in the eye, slapped his thigh and said:

«Listen, Mustafa, listen you, 'Tafari'. Don't try to come the big man over me, because I've done nothing. Better confess your own sins which even a river could not wash away.»

That is where I heard for the first time that Anastas Lula called Mustafa Gjinishi «Tafari». I gave it no importance, because the name Ras Tafari or Hailë Selassie I had become familiar to us at the time of the war in Abyssinia.

However, when the BBC mentioned the

name «Tafari» in its message, my memory clicked at once and I made the connection.

«I'm sure of this,» I told the comrades. «We must call Mustafa and persuade him to admit it.»

«Don't be hasty,» said someone, «we shall certainly ask him, but we must act so that we get the bird into the cage, because there's a danger he may give us the slip. Now he has heard the messages, he may suspect that we are on his trail.»

During those days Mustafa Gjinishi was in Tirana. For some time he had been nagging me for permission to go there, in order to meet Cungu who had control of the trucks of a ministry in order to arrange with him the transport of the grain which we were to buy to store as a reserve, as well as to «do certain other jobs», as he put it himself. We had given him two days leave, but four days had gone by and he had not returned. I was convinced that he would achieve nothing, because the question of the transport of grain was simply a pretext for him to go to Tirana. I sent Nako [Spiru], who was in Tirana, a letter* in which, amongst other things, I wrote: «We are not happy about the business of

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* Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 1, p. 454, Alb. ed.

Mustafa. The 'Mukje question',(**1**)and the leaflet which was issued, have made us think a great deal about the message from London for Tafari and the Albanian government which the BBC mentions, and which it regrets that we do not have,» etc. I told him also that these things ought to make them reflect a little, too, because the attitude of Mustafa seemed to me precisely the attitude of someone with a worry on his mind, who is constantly haunted by the fear he might be exposed. «We must check up on his connections and movements without fail,» I advised Nako, «hence, we must play our hand very carefully until we discover the dirty linen he is trying to hide.»

That is how we acted. We waited for Musta-

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1 On August 1-2, 1943, the 2nd meeting of representatives of the Balli Kombëtar and the National Liberation General Council was held in the village of Mukje. There Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi, failing to adhere to the instructions which they had been given, fell into the positions of reaction. They capitulated to the Balli Kombëtar, treating it as an anti-fascist organization, and agreed to share the leadership of the National Liberation War and the political power with the representatives of this traitor organization and accepted the proposal of the Ballists to create a so-called «committee for the salvation of Albania» with equal numbers of representatives, which would have meant the liquidation of the National Liberation General Council and violation of the interests of the people and the Homeland. On the initiative of Comrade Enver Hoxha, the CC of the CPA, and the National Liberation General Council rejected the Mukje Agreement as a dangerous and unprincipled compromise

fa to return to Labinot. I summoned him to the room where I worked. It was a dramatic night.

«Mustafa Gjinishi,» I said, «what was that message the BBC broadcast a few days ago? What connection has this broadcast with you?»

«I know nothing about it, Comrade Enver,» he replied very red-faced, and to give me the impression that he was indignant at this question, although he was unable to hide his alarm, he continued: «Why do you ask me? What do you suspect? I am a patriot, a communist. What sort of question is this that you're asking me?»

He was ill at ease and, like the wily devil he was, he tried to wriggle like an eel.

«Gjinishi,» I said, «tonight you are going to tell the Party everything, or otherwise I shall tell it,» and I reeled off one by one the things we had observed: the very cordial talks with Colonel Nicholls in Biza, the proposal to send representatives to London, the bag of gold that he had given Kaçaçi, and so on.

«Come on, speak, what have you to tell the Party?» I said in a stern tone.

Instead of replying he lit a cigarette.

I lit one, too, as if I wanted to take the conversation more calmly.

«Tell me how matters stand?» I said. «What connection have you with the British? What mischief have you been up to? Because the level of the punishment, which the Party will mete

out to you, depends on your explanation of this matter. This has great importance for our Party. Therefore, explain everything to us.»

For hours on end Mustafa turned and twisted like a snake caught by the head and tried to deny everything. Finally, hard-pressed in the face of many facts, willy-nilly he was obliged to confess and, briefly, this is what he admitted: he said he was not a spy of the British, but had «collaborated» with them «for the good of Albania»! He had first made contact with the British in Yugoslavia, where he had met Lt.-Col. Oakley-Hill. He had sent him to Albania together with Abaz Kupi.

«My crime,» said Mustafa, «is that I did not inform the Party about this, and about what occurred later. The Party did its utmost to help me, but I thought and acted on my own responsibility and according to the decisions we took with Hill.»

«What were these decisions?»

«These decisions,» he continued, «were that I should organize the war in Albania with the patriots, and possibly also with the communists. You know something of my activity here, but you do not know that a certain Cungu, sent from London, entered and left the country secretly in order to make contact with me. I reported to him on the situation, my activity and what I intended to do.»

«What instructions did Cungu give you?»

«He encouraged me. He told me to continue on this course and opened the prospect that later we would have greater possibilities for work. In confidence, he told me that I should work with great care and persistence to make contact with Mehdi Frashëri and convince him to go abroad. 'Naturally,' continued Cungu, 'later we shall organize his departure and yours for London and there Mehdi will form an Albanian government in exile. With or without Zog at the head, this we shall study because it will depend on the circumstances existing at that time.'»

«And what else?» I put in.

«He, Cungu, put me in contact with the Turkish consulate,» continued Mustafa, «because it had still not been withdrawn and he gave me a contact with a person from Tirana. We decided that we would send the news from the country, information and reports through this channel. He also gave me the passwords which you have heard from the BBC, 'which,' Cungu told me, 'you will hear only when we have reached conclusions in connection with several major problems about which we have talked. Don't worry,' he told me, 'because we shall find the way to inform you when you should listen'.»

This was the essence of the matter.

There and then I summoned several com-

rades who were in Labinot at that time and related to them all that Mustafa Gjinishi had told me.

After showing that we took a very stern view of his activity, I said to Mustafa:

«What punishment do you deserve from the Party for these things you have done, for this treachery in the service of a foreign capitalist power?»

«Shooting,» said Gjinishi and he took out his revolver and laid it on the table. «Let the Party make its decision, I shall wait in the yard,» he said and went outside.

After several hours of thrashing the matter out amongst ourselves, weighing up everything: the circumstances of the war, Gjinishi's social circle and acquaintances, the danger he represented, his treacherous activity, his arrogant, bigshot character, his complete confession of his activity, we decided not to condemn him to death.

We summoned him and after once more listing all the faults of which he was guilty, one by one, we asked him again if he had anything else to say, whether he felt remorseful and whether he would give the Party his word that he would abandon this course forever. He replied that from now on he would remain «loyal to death to the Party and the National Liberation War». Then we told him that the Party was magnanimous and was going to pardon him once again, but that he must understand clearly that he must atone

for these evil things he had done through deeds, through fighting.

Thus we parted with Mustafa Gjinishi on this occasion. However, even in the future he never became a good man, but continued his course of betrayal and remained an agent of the British.

This was a dangerous and diabolical activity which would have brought colossal damage to the people, the Homeland and our National Liberation War, if we had not cut all the threads of it. Nothing had escaped or would escape the vigilant eye of the Party. The British and their agents were not going to have their way in Albania as they hoped. Of course, we also uncovered the details of this matter which Mustafa was compelled to admit, including the detail that Qorri knew his pseudonym. All this helped us greatly because it made us even more vigilant.

May 1944. We were in Helmës of Skrapar, engaged in preparations for the Congress of Përmet. I had finished the general outline of the report, the statement and the other main documents of this important congress which was to mark a stage of historic importance in our National Liberation War and the people's power. It was an historic event which our Party had carefully prepared through its correct and consistent Marxist-Leninist line and through the course of

the war. The holding of the Congress would have major repercussions both inside and outside the country, and would give a further great impulse to the National Liberation War against the occupiers and the traitors. However, our enemies, both open and secret, who were now seized with panic, would not sit idle, but on the contrary, would strive with every means to sabotage the congress.

Precisely on the eve of this historic event, the British officer Lt.-Col. Leake(**1**)was dropped in at Staravecka.

A few days after his arrival, he sent his batman to ask permission to pay me a courtesy visit. I gave him a positive answer and the Lt.-Colonel was not long in coming. I received him at our headquarters which we had established in old Mehmet's house.

After I had asked him some questions about the development of the war on the fronts against Germany in Europe, about which he told me nothing concrete (the British officers who were sent to us were all experts in talking about everything and saying nothing concrete), he asked me about the war in Albania. I replied in a similar fashion and took the opportunity, as usual, to tell him that our «great British allies» were not assisting us with weapons. He replied that he was

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1 Chief of the section for Albania at Headquarters.

not au fait with this question and that he had come here to assist the war against the common enemy. Like the others, he made us some false promises, but the fact was, and this we learned later, that he had come for purposes completely the opposite of those he expressed to us, that is, not to assist us, but to sabotage the National Liberation War.

I gathered that he had been informed that we were going to hold a congress. «This is another sign,» I thought, «which shows that the British must have an informer in our ranks.» And this informer was Mustafa Gjinishi. For some time this had become more than clear to me.

When the day for our departure for Përmet was approaching, I sent this British officer an invitation from the National Liberation Front to attend the Congress of Përmet as a representative of «our great ally, Britain». In the reply which he sent me, in which he also sought another meeting with me, he said that he would not come to the congress, because he had no authorization from his government.

At the meeting, after the usual exchange of greetings, amongst other things I expressed my regret that he was not going to attend the congress.

«In my opinion, Lt.-Colonel, the reasons you give us are unfounded. You have plenty of time to seek the authorization of your government»

After the question of the non-attendance of the British Lt.-Colonel at the coming congress was closed in this way, he launched into an old theme, the refrain on which the British military missions all harped, although they must have long been clear on the answer they would get from us on this. Those arrogant people of old England still had not come to their senses.

«Mr. Hoxha, I have a request to put to you, or you might say, to let you know that I want to meet Mr. Tefik Cfiri and his fighters in Mallakastra and I want you to help me in this, because I want to hear what he thinks and what he is doing in order to report to my government the truth about the Balli Kombëtar.»

I felt the blood begin to mount in my head. I strove to keep my temper, but in the end I could not control myself:

«This refrain of yours is an old one, Lt.-Colonel,» I said. «I've heard it so frequently from you British that it has become sickening to me. In short, you want to hold meetings with the enemies of the Albanian people, with the sworn enemies of the National Liberation Front; you ask to meet the collaborators with the nazi-fascist occupiers. This is a disgrace for you and unacceptable to us.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» he snapped back, red-faced, «you cannot dictate to my government what it should do.»

«At present, Mr. Representative of the government of England, you are in the partisan zones. The Anti-fascist National Liberation Front and its partisan army rule here and not your government. You may go to the Ballist and criminal Tefik Cfiri, a collaborator of the occupiers, you may also go with him to Tirana, if you wish, but understand clearly, if you go outside our liberated territory, you can never come back here to us. The People's National Liberation Front, which we represent, is the master here. I put the matter clearly: either with us or with our enemies, take your choice!» and I immediately rose to my feet giving the impression that the talk was over. The Lt.-Colonel was dumbfounded by this reply which he had not expected. He put on his cap, tucked his baton under his arm and took his leave red-faced. «Niko, see the Lt.-Colonel out,» I said to a partisan and he and old Mehmet escorted him to the gate.

During these days, Mustafa Gjinishi had come to Helmës. Of course, I told the comrades what had occurred with the British Lt.-Colonel and all of them were indignant when they heard of his aims and told me that I had acted very well, just as he deserved. Mustafa, too, expressed the same opinion.

The day came for us to leave for Përmet. Early in the morning we made ready and the caravan of partisans and horses left Helmës and

took the road down towards Staravecka. Another comrade and I delayed a little in the house of Nevruz and Nurihan where we were staying. Mustafa Gjinishi was the last to leave old Mehmet's house after the whole caravan had gone, and he thought that we, too, had gone with it. Hence, he was sure there was no one behind him. We came out when he had gone round the bend from which Helmës could no longer be seen, and as we were going down the hill, we saw a British soldier hurrying towards the bend. We stepped up our pace and arrived in time to see what they would do. The British soldier quickly handed Gjinishi a letter and left immediately. Mustafa turned his head, realized that we had seen everything, put the letter in his pocket and continued on his way.

When we caught up with him and demanded that he hand over the letter, he told us: «I shall not surrender the letter alive.» And he did not surrender it. We abused him, calling him everything, while all he said was: «Do as you like. I am what I am and this is what I shall remain.»

«We'll talk to you again in Përmet,» we said and ended the conversation with this scoundrel who had certainly received an order from the British to sabotage the Congress of Përmet. However he was unable to do so, because by now he was a valueless card. As soon as we got to Përmet, I immediately informed Spiro Moisiu and

that night I went to Babë Myslim and told him everything. Myslim was absolutely revolted. When I told him that if Gjinishi continued in this way, we would arrest him and hand him over to the military court, Myslim said to me: «Appoint me president of the court.» I also informed Medar Shtylla who, for his part, informed a number of other comrades among whom Mustafa might have some influence. In fact he approached some of them, but got a hostile reception from all.

He tried to sabotage the decisions which were to be taken about our government, about Zog. etc. and to make people discontented. But we did not allow him to do so and followed close on his heels at every step. Finally, when the cup was filled I summoned him and told him bluntly: «This is the last time that I shall warn you. Watch out! Don't sabotage our work, because I shall give the order to arrest you and put you on trial.» I saw that he was really frightened, because he went pale, his eyes shifted from here to there, he tried to mutter some sort of protest, but could not do so. He went with his head down and shoulders drooping.

On the last day of the Congress, when we were eating a meal with a number of delegates, I was informed that a British Lt.-Colonel had come and was asking to see me. «Bring him here,» I said. It was the «famous» Lt.-Colonel with whom I had quarrelled at Helmës, because

he wanted to meet Tefik Cfiri. Following the custom, I invited him to join us in the meal.

«You have come late, Lt.-Colonel,» I said. «Now everything is over.»

The proceedings of the Congress had been brought to a successful conclusion. Its decisions, which emerged from the barrel of the partisan rifle, were vital for the Albanian people who in the past, too, had had to hold historic congresses like the Convention of Lezha (**1**), the Albanian League of Prizren, the Congress of Lushnja(**2**),etc. from which appeals for aid were addressed to the Great Powers, whereas with the Congress of Përmet things were different. It asked nobody for aid. From now on, the people themselves would decide the fate of Albania. The time when Albania was called «a geographical expression» or was considered a token for barter was over. The Congress of Përmet warned the imperialist Great Powers that history was not to be repeated, the Albanian delegates would no longer be humiliated as they were in the past by

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1 On March 2, 1444, the leaders of the Albanian insurgents, under the leadership of Skanderbeg, held an assembly in Lezha and pleged to unite the Albanian forces in the fight against the Ottoman invaders.

2 It was held on January 28, 1920, and rejected the Secret Treaty of London of 1915 on the partitioning of the Albanian territory. The delegates from almost all parts of Albania decided that its complete independence must be preserved and elected a national government, etc.

Bismarck and Lord Beaconsfield and their successors who tore Kosova from Albania and gave it to the Kings of Serbia, that nobody would ever again be permitted to act like Sazonov, the foreign minister of the Czar of Russia, who called Shkodra an omelette for the Prince Nicola of Montenegro. The Congress of Përmet told the Anglo-American imperialists unequivocally that their ships could never land King Zog in Durrës, as the Great Powers did in the past with the German Prince Wied, who became a plaything in their hands, that the flag of Skanderbeg, the flag of Albania, would wave proudly over Vlora and Sazan. The Congress told the imperialists that the time had passed when they could sentence Albanian patriots to death because they raised their flag in Korça, that the flag of Albania would never again be raised in Gjirokastra under the «protection» of the bayonets of the Italian General Ferrero(**1**)and under the threats of the supporters of Venizelos.

The delegates to the Congress of Përmet signed these decisions, transmitted them to the world and these were the decisions that proud, militant, revolutionary Albania, led by its glorious Party, proclaimed there to the Anglo-Americans and their lackeys.

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1 In June 1917, for its own imperialist aims, Italy staged in Gjirokastra the proclamation of «independence» of Albania «under the shield and protection of the Kingdom of Italy.»

«I thought you said you were not going to join us,» I said to the British officer.

«I've not come for the Congress,» he said, «I came only to say goodbye to you.»

«Where do you intend to go?» I asked him.

«I'm leaving for England,» he answered.

«Ah, goodbye then,» I said. «Do you need any assistance?»

«I want to go to the Coast. A ship will come there to take me to Italy. Therefore, please give me one or two partisans as an escort.»

«Of course,» I said and issued the order for two partisans to escort him to Poliçan of Gjirokastra. «Do you want anything else?» I asked him.

«No,» he replied and left.

Apparently Leake had thought he should pass this way in order to discover something about the proceedings of the Congress, perhaps to make contact with Gjinishi and, if this proved impossible, to find out what had happened about the orders which he must have given in the letter which he sent by the English soldier and about Gjinishi himself after the event on the way. The British Lt.-Colonel did not reach the Coast, because he was killed at Sheper of Zagoria during a German bombing raid. He was killed in his sleep by a direct hit on a white tent which his colleague, Major Tillman, had erected against the advice of the Partisan Staff of the Vlora-

Gjirokastra 1st Operational Zone. Thus, the delegate of Great Britain was unable to report to his centre about what was occurring in Albania where all the plans of the British were failing, one after the other.

After the Congress of Përmet we sent Mustafa Gjinishi to the North to the partisan detachments. Once again we treated that person with indulgence. However, «the wolf may change his skin but does not forget his habits». Regardless of the heavy blow he had received, even there he did not give up his manoeuvres and evildoing to attack the Party and win people to his side. I received a report from the staff of the 1st Division which said that one day Mustafa Gjinishi had taken Haxhi Seseri aside, as was his habit, and after complaining to him, had said to him among other things, «Since Mukje, the Party has not looked on me and Dr. Dishnica with a kindly eye. They haven't given me the responsibility that is due to me, while they've made Haxhi Lleshi Minister of the Interior. The Party is afraid, because I have a great deal of influence and support among the people..., they are afraid of me because I sympathize with the British. Recently I've had a talk with Comrade Enver Hoxha with whom I had a big quarrel.» And he had asked Haxhi, continued the report, to tell Mysim Peza that he should intervene with the comrades «to have Tafari returned to Peza

as quickly as possible.» The fellow was so shameless as to ask Myslim to «intervene»! But after all that Mustafa Gjinishi had done, Babë Myslim never wanted to set eyes on him again, let alone take him to Peza.

In August 1944, a British officer sent me a message transmitted from his Headquarters(**1**)which said: «For General Hoxha. I regret to inform you that Mustafa Gjinishi was killed on the front of the 1st Division. He and Smith fell into an ambush by a German patrol. Smith escaped unscathed. Great loss for the allied cause.» Finally the officer added on his own behalf: «Mustafa Gjinishi was always a great friend of ours.»

It emerged more than clearly from this document what a loss the death of Mustafa Gjinishi was to the British. But for us it emerged just as clearly that up to the moment he died beside Mr. Smith, he remained an agent and lackey of the British.

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1 The Headquarters of the SOE in Bari, Italy, transmitted to Mission Consensus II:

«Smith reported August 28 as follows: Mustafa and self separated from escort, ambushed by Hun patrol at range 10 yards. First fire wounded Gjinishi but while assisting him to cover, second burst killed him. Self unhurt.» *(Signals from SOE Headquarters in Bari, Italy, to Mission Consensus II, May-Oct. 1944; No. 202, p. 53).*

V

THE BRITISH AND ABAZ KUPI

McLean: «What is Mr. Kupi saying?» Bazi i Canës — his games. The leaflet and Legaliteti. The Kupi-Davies meeting: the apprentice renders account to his master. The underhand deals of the «minor Zog» with the British, the Germans, the Ballists and the quislings. McLean in Albania again. General Wilson's note. Ultimatum to the ultimatum. Order: «Abaz Kupi and his gangs must be routed». The end? — The «shepherds» board ships, the «flock» left in disarray.

In the first days of July 1943 we gathered at Labinot and formed the General Staff of the National Liberation Army.

After we had finished the meeting, McLean came there, too, to congratulate us on the success achieved. He knew some of those who took part in the Conference, but did not know others. He pretended to be meeting Bazi i Canës for the first

time, but I noticed that the eyes of the two of them were gleaming with joy when they met. Without doubt they had found the way to communicate with each other previously.

Bazi i Canës, with that cunning crooked face of his, was all smiles and spoke sweetly to the Major. Standing pompously behind Bazi was Murat Basha, formerly one of Zog's senior officers, an ignorant parody of an officer. He presented himself as the adjutant engaged with Abaz Kupi's «war plans», stood there at attention just behind «the minor Zog» with a pair of binoculars which seemed to be permanently slung round his neck, in fact he might even have slept with them.

I explained to McLean that the General Staff of the National Liberation Army would greatly extend the war against the occupiers, would create brigades and later, divisions.

«Therefore,» I added, «we present to you our request for arms and ammunition, because the quantity you have dropped us so far is so small as to be hardly worth mentioning. Is that not so, comrades?» I asked those around me.

«That is so!» they all replied at once, apart from Bazi i Canës who addressed the following words to me:

«They should also drop arms in Mat and a British mission should come there, too, just as they have gone to Mr. Myslim and Mr. Haxhi.»

«What is Mr. Kupi saying?» asked the British Major, who could not conceal his particular interest.

«Explain,» I said to Mustafa Gjinishi. After Mustafa had translated, the British Major said:

«We shall be very happy to fulfil his desire if the General Staff permits us.»

«Do we permit it?» I asked Comrade Spiro Moisiu.

«I say yes,» replied Spiro, and added:

«Now, Mr. Bazi, you have no further grounds for delay, because you will have weapons and will be able to fight.»

«That's what I'm here for,» said Bazi, giving him a sour look.

«What is Mr. Kupi saying?» asked the British Major again.

«Explain the solemn promise Mr. Abaz has made.» I told Mustafa Gjinishi again.

But what was «Mr. Kupi»?

We knew him well, but the unfortunate people of Kruja and Ishëm, Durrës and Kavaja knew him even better. Under the regime of Zog this illiterate rose to the rank of gendarmerie commander. He was the strong arm of the despot Zog. Through crimes, underhand deals and robbery of the common people, Bazi i Canës enriched himself and was promoted to the rank of major. He killed and tortured the poor peas-

ants and exterminated all his opponents, made himself omnipotent and the executor of the «deeds» of his patron. For these merits, in the first days of April 1939, after the failure of efforts to come to terms with the Duce, Ahmet Zog entrusted Bazi with protecting his retreat to Greece. The sons of the people fought the blackshirts in Durrës. Mujo Ulqinaku and other sons of the people whose hearts bled for Albania were killed, while Bazi i Canës fired a few shots, but for purposes quite the opposite of those of the ordinary fighters who shed their blood for the Homeland. Bazi i Canës «fought» to protect the departure of his patron and, as soon as he heard that «His Majesty» had crossed the border safe and sound, took to his heels himself.

He ran away to Turkey and there, like his master, lived very comfortably on the wealth he had squeezed from the enslaved people. From Turkey Abaz Kupi was enticed to Yugoslavia by the agents of Section D of the Intelligence Service precisely when the resistance of our people was on the upsurge. There they prepared him to return to Albania in order to fish in troubled waters.

Finally Bazi i Canës entered Albania with his pockets full of gold sovereigns and lay low in the villages of Kruja like a hunter awaiting the moment when the prey comes his way.

Shevqet Vërlaci, who was quisling prime minister at that time, learned of his arrival and, on the urging of the Italians, sent Tahsim Bishqemi as his agent to make approaches to him. However, Bazi i Canës was a cunning fox and not to be snared easily. He was well acquainted with the character of Zog's former father-in-law, his rival and family enemy, whom, on Zog's orders, he had attempted to murder. The bey of Elbasan never forgot this. Nevertheless, Bishqemi carried to his bosses the reply that Bazi would not annoy the Italians provided they left him in peace. This pleased the Italian fascists, because for the time being it was not to their advantage to make trouble with Abaz Kupi, and thus the question of his presence there was passed over in silence to be taken up again when the conditions were ripe.

The moment came. Vërlaci fell and was replaced by Mustafa Kruja (Merlika), an even more savage executioner of our people, long-time agent of the SIM and an old friend of Abaz. This was a good chance for Bazi to emerge from his lair. Through the mediation of their hirelings, these two scoundrels held a meeting in a remote corner of Kruja. like thieves in the darkness of the night, far from the eyes of the world. Each knew the other well. Bazi i Canës tried to convince Mustafa Kruja about the need for Zog to return, but Mustafa Kruja, who had sold his soul to the

foreigners to achieve his dreams, would not surrender the throne so easily. He reckoned his own accounts, which were different from those of Abaz Kupi and Zog, who was living in the luxury hotels of London. So they were unable to reach an agreement, as they did in 1920, when through their trickery they prevented the region of Kruja from being represented at the Congress of Lushnja. Merlika attacked Bazi i Canës and forced him to leave the lair where he was lying in wait for his prey. The chameleon thought the moment had come to change his colour temporarily. Bazi and his henchmen exploited this attack to present themselves as opponents of the occupiers and the quislings. They began to publicize loudly that the «patriot» Abaz Kupi was fighting fascism! In this way he deceived and rallied around himself many people who truly wanted to fight the occupier.

In these circumstances the National Liberation Movement invited Abaz Kupi to the Conference of Peza. He postponed his reply for a short time until he received the approval of the British Special Operations Executive, which instructed him to join this movement and erode and undermine it from within.

Bazi i Canës would have liked the Conference of Peza to be a meeting of swindling bajraktars to skin the people, as in the past. At Peza it would have pleased him to find the old world,

the world of pseudo-democrats, men of compromise and traitors, those who changed their flag a hundred times, those who sold their honour and the Homeland for five pieces of silver, those who tried to keep the people in darkness in order to lead them by the nose more easily, to make them serfs and to milk them dry. There he would have liked to have had his own friends.

However, for him and his bosses these things remained only desires. Those who had gathered at Peza were valiant and resolute men, the cream of the people, the communists together with genuine unwavering democrats, stern opponents of unprincipled compromise and of fascism, who represented a whole people who had risen to their feet for freedom. Bazi did not suspect that the sound political and organizational foundations of a great movement which would unite the people in the struggle, were being laid there, the foundations of a progressive democratic state, of a powerful army which would withstand any storm and tempest and would defeat the savagest enemies which mankind had seen and drive them from the Homeland.

Although Abaz Kupi was faced with something unexpected at Peza, he joined in the dance and, as the cunning rogue he was, in order to fulfil the task closest to his heart and the desire of his patrons, he decided to keep in step until the opportune moment arrived. He pretended to

accept the historic decisions, of the Conference of Peza, while really believing that what was decided and the pledge which was made there would remain on paper, and that those young fellows who had gathered there, those resolute communists and patriots who were linked by the blood and suffering of a whole people, would never be able to achieve the things which they pledged to achieve.

This ignorant and ruthless bajraktar was not a man of his word, nor a fighting man; he was always a creature of treachery hatched up in dark holes and corners, and a slave to foreign money. We knew this, therefore we kept vigilant watch on his every step. For appearances' sake Abaz Kupi pledged that he would fight the enemy, while in reality he avoided any clash with the enemy and, like the trickster he was, tried to take the credit for the heroic deeds and the bloodshed of the valiant fighters who fell in battle in the towns and villages. But this was not to go for long, either. Despite his manoeuvres, in the National Liberation Front he could see no ray of hope for the sinister plans he was hatching up and indeed, in it he saw the doom of his ambitions and those of his patrons behind the scenes.

Abaz Kupi also looked askance at the Balli Kombëtar. He could not regard it as any basis for his purposes. He knew that this basket of crabs contained a motley of characters: there

were some who had once been opponents of Zog because he had robbed them of their soft positions; there were some who posed as opponents, but their opposition was only in words; there were others like Nuredin Bey Vlora, whom Zog had condemned to death in the past because they had attempted to seize his throne; and there were also those, like Mustafa Kruja and Shevqet Vërlaci, openly linked with fascism, who kept in the background, in the Balli Kombëtar; hence, every kind of reactionary «politician» and hardened criminal, both political and common, had found shelter in the Balli Kombëtar. Above all Bazi knew that great anarchy prevailed in that organization, hence he put no stock on it. He had expressed this lack of faith to General Davies. Bazi i Canës had displayed his disdain for the Balli Kombëtar at Shëngjergj, too, at the meeting which he and Davies held with the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar, who had made the General's head ring with their talk about «ethnic Albania» and the juridical arguments they reeled off to let him know what great thinkers they were. The General himself had told Frederik Nosi this.

During the discussions between the General and the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar, the «soldier» Abaz Kupi could not keep still; he went in and out of the room where the meeting was being held. He was impatient with their stand

and frequently winked at Colonel Nicholls to deride them.

This was the person on whom Great Britain pinned its hopes to get control of little Albania. In London they thought, «Italy will be a defeated country; we can be sure we shall get control of Yugoslavia through the government of Subasic, which will manoeuvre with Tito and the partisans; in Greece we hope to establish a government under our influence, which will restore the monarchy.»

But what were they to do about Albania?

Over a long period the British ministers and consuls had continually served up to their government the idea that Albania was a country with a backward, illiterate population, without culture, incapable of governing itself and that it could not exist as a free and independent state, therefore it had to be taken under the wing of a great power, which, according to the taste of the British politicians, ought to be none other than Britain itself! In the opinion of British diplomacy Albania was now a prey which had no way of escape, however much it tried, could not live alone and, therefore, in one way or another would fall into the mouth of the «British Lion». Although British diplomacy was fed up with the tale of the regime of Zog, in this regime it found a *modus vivendi* for its plans. In the past Zog had been brought to power by Wrangel's forces,

but in London they thought, «This time we shall take him to Albania. It was General Percy and Lt.-Col. Hill who organized the gendarmerie for Zog.»

The so-called opposition to Zog had melted away like snowflakes in the water. This former «Opposition» had now become the quisling government, the Balli Kombëtar, etc. «The real opposition today,» thought London, «is comprised of the communists and the National Liberation Front, but we shall sweep them away.» How could they sweep them away? British diplomacy thought that communism was something imported into Albania from abroad and as such it had no basis within the country. In its opinion, the Albanian people might accept almost anything, but communism never! London was convinced of this, also, because it proceeded from what it was hatching up in Greece and Yugoslavia. The British believed that it would be no great problem to get Albania into the bag, although they could see with their own eyes the heroic resistance of the Albanian people. Their first attempt was the infiltration of their agents, Mustafa Gjinishi, Abaz Kupi and other two-faced individuals into the National Liberation Front in order to undermine it from within.

When they saw that this plan was failing, the British started on another plan. They thought that the National Liberation Front and the parti-

san war were simply a phenomenon of the «Tosks», of Southern Albania, therefore in the existing conditions they believed Albania must be split into two parts divided by a wide gulf: into Toskëria and Gegëria. According to them, the North was the cradle of the monarchy, that was the place of «valour» and «bravery», hence the North would become a barricade against the communists. Their tools would build this barricade, the «strong man», Abaz Kupi, who would win over the other chiefs, would fight together with them, would seize power and eventually establish the monarchy and Zog, the «King of the Albanians», would be restored to his legitimate throne! The whole people would rally round the «reformer» King who would have Britain and America as his great backers! (**1**)

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1 In a report on the situation in Albania written on August 25, 1944, an American wrote:

«If the idea of dividing the country into spheres of influence on a Tosk-Gheg basis (as shown above) seems sensible, the Allies should give it moral and even military support. They should *forbid* LNC to occupy by *force* northern towns held by Nationalists and they should have means available to drive them out if LNC should seize those towns.

6. At the very earliest moment *American* troops to the number of 5000 should be sent to Tirana and Durazzo in order:
a. To reassure Albanians that America is interested in her [Albania's] fate.
b. To forestall possible occupation by a Russian task force...
c. To forestall the possibility that LNC might (if it conquered

Proceeding from these aims and plans London set to work with all its energy, on the one hand, to threaten and intimidate us and, on the other hand, to strengthen the positions of Abaz Kupi in Central and Northern Albania. To assist the realization of these aims, Churchill would send Julian Amery, the son of a member of his Cabinet, as tutor to the «minor Zog» in «the «mountains of Albania», just as he had sent his own son, Randolph, to Tito.

The first attempt of Bazi i Canës and company to bury the National Liberation Movement was made at the meeting in Mukje. There he tried to make the National Liberation Front fall prey to the Balli Kombëtar. The role of the pimps in getting Bazi «into bed» with the Balli Kombëtar was played by the British officers with McLean at the head and his friend Mehdi Frashëri, who was to make his debut later on the stage of the German «theatre». The political adventurers of the Balli Kombëtar such as Ali Bey Këlcyra, Mithat Bey Frashëri, Nuredin Bey Vlora and others forgot their hostility to Zog. Faced with the danger of

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the opponents) deny the right of the Allies to occupy Albania. This is *not* an unlikely contingency.

d. To prevent fighting between the Nationalists and Partisans on the border of those territories assigned to each.

e. To have a force ready to invade Kossova if things get out of hand there.» *(«The Albanian situation — Comments of August 25; 1944.» FO 371/43554-3370. PRO: (From the photocopy of the original in the AIH; Tirana.)*

the National Liberation Movement, they were ready to sell their own mothers, let alone to collaborate with Abaz Kupi or anyone else, just so long as they were against the Movement. For the time being their aim was to strangle this movement and afterwards they would come to terms amongst themselves at the expense of their permanent victim, suffering Albania.

Bazi i Canës aimed to paralyze our war through this union on rotten foundations. To accept the Mukje Agreement would mean to capitulate to internal and external reaction, to sanction the inevitable defeat of the National Liberation Movement. Mukje would have been the Albanian Varkiza. But the Communist Party was not asleep. It immediately attacked the betrayal of Ymer Dishnica, Abaz Kupi and Mustafa Gjinishi and did not allow the «fathers of the nation» to take over the reins, and then the soft seats, and lord it over the people again.

The capitulation of Italy whetted the appetite of both Bazi and the Balli Kombëtar. They saw that Italy's ship had already sunk, its horse had cast its shoes so they quickly changed their tune. They decided «to go to the mountains», «to fight the Italian occupiers», to show the people their «heroic deeds» and «sacrifices», because they deceived themselves that in this way they could gain the soft seats.

One September day in 1943, we came across

a leaflet which spoke of this «important» decision which had been taken in «the mountains of free Albania» by «the valiant fighters of the highlands» who had risen again, as at other times when black clouds had appeared in the sky of Albania! The chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar and Abaz Kupi, who signed that leaflet, had sounded the alarm and «the men of the highlands», those «men who had remained unaffected by foreign propaganda», had gathered in a convention and had pledged to unite «for the salvation of Albania»! *O tempora! O mores!* I do not intend to dwell at length on this question in my memoirs because our well-known writer Shevqet Musaraj has portrayed «the fight», «the valour», and the other «deeds» of the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar beautifully in his satirical poem *The Epic of the Balli Kombëtar*.

With the capitulation of fascist Italy, Abaz Kupi and his henchmen fell upon the dead horse like hyenas. They stripped and robbed the Italian soldiers and armed their mercenaries with the weapons they took. Not without purpose, the British officers, Hands and Riddle, in Dibra did not want to disarm the Italian division there, but sent it to Mat. Wherever it suited him, Bazi i Canës. who still had not formally broken his connections with the National Liberation Movement, used its name and gave orders in the name of the General Staff. He had done this several times

and did it again in Dibra when he came out in support of the British officers' order that the Italians should be disarmed in his stronghold, Mat.

By this time the Germans had entered Albania. Among the traitor chiefs, Lumo Skëndo, Ali Këlcyra and others, whose manoeuvre of going to the mountains had turned out an utter failure, the nazi occupation gave rise to another plan: to draw the chestnuts out of the fire with the bayonets of the Hitlerite army. Bazi i Canës also wanted to do this for his own aims, but he did not want to be associated with the Balli Kombëtar, because he wanted to be in the forefront himself and personally linked with the Germans, but, according to the advice of the British, without appearing as their tool, as the Balli Kombëtar was doing. While he was thinking up fresh plans, according to his instructions from London, in September 1943, we summoned him to take part in the Conference of Labinot and at the same time to explain his attitude towards the war and the movement. Bazi did not come. He sent a brief note in which he wrote: «I agree with all the decisions which will be taken at the Conference; work prevents me from coming». The swindling bajraktar did not come to that meeting that was so important to our people, under the pretext that he was engaged in «other work», because together with McLean, he was preparing for the creation of the «National-Zogite Party» as a

party outside the National Liberation Movement and opposed to it. It meant nothing to him that he was violating his pledge to the National Liberation Council taken before the flag. Of course this was not the first time he had trampled on this flag!

We saw that Bazi i Canës was on the move, making frequent trips to the North, sometimes alone and sometimes with the British officers, McLean, Hands and Riddle. They went from one district to another, made contact with the reactionary chiefs of Dibra, with Muharrem Bajraktari, with Gjon Markagjoni of Mirdita and with Nik Sokoli of Malësia e Madhe. They spread their web to Kosova also, to the Kryezius, who had just returned from Italy, and other reactionaries. Everywhere they talked and made plans with individuals sold body and soul to the enemy, and with British money formed «alliances» amongst them in the manner of the old regime and bought the swindling bajraktars with money and promises of posts. This was precisely how Zog operated in the past.

Abaz Kupi thought that the time had come for the card of Zog, that was in the hands of reaction and the British, to be played openly. To this end on September 18, 1943, a leaflet was issued, which announced the formation of the «National Zogite Party», which a little later would be christened Legaliteti, headed by Abaz Kupi

and a certain Xhemal Herri, whom the people called Xhemal Horri (Rogue — in Albanian). Legaliteti launched a great propaganda campaign about the royal «genius», his «work», and the «care» which he and the princesses displayed for the Albanian youth and the Albanian people! The British brought Abaz Kupi photographs showing «His Majesty» and the royal family walking in Hyde Park in London and these were published in the wretched newspaper «Atdheu», which wrote nostalgically about the time of the «legal» regime of Zog but said not one word against the occupiers. After he created Legaliteti, Bazi would have to deal with the Germans, not to fight them, but to collaborate with them. According to him, the Germans were in Albania temporarily. They merely wanted a secure passage through the country, while the danger came from the Reds who were linked with foreigners! This was also the thesis of the quisling Mehdi Frashëri, that blind tool of the Gestapo, whom the German occupiers placed at the head of the «Regency» (which would «govern» the country in the name of the king till his return), and who became the sponsor of Bazi i Canës at the German Command.

Who was this person with the surname Frashëri?

He had been a Pasha of Turkey in Egypt and Lebanon. Under the regime of Zog he be-

came prime minister. With the occupation of Albania by Italy the fascists took him to Rome and established him in the luxurious «Victoria» Hotel where they kept him, thinking that one day he would be needed. The day came for him to be used, but not by Mussolini who had broken his neck, but by the nazi Command in our country. Through the influence of Neubacher, Hitler's special representative for South-east Europe, Mehdi Frashëri was brought back to Albania in September 1943. From the tribune of the «Assembly» this «patriot», who had put himself completely in the service of German policy, sent Abaz Kupi congratulations on the «war» which he was waging.

Now Bazi i Canës had to play two roles: as a collaborator with the Germans and the quisling government and as a collaborator with the British (**1**). Through these roles he aimed to make a reality of his dreams of re-establishing the mon-

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1 On March 15, 1944 Boxshall sent Michael Rose at Foreign Office the copy of a telegram from Istanbul, informing that Rakip Frashëri, son of Mehdi, had brought a «letter from MEHDI FRASHËRI to TURKISH PRESIDENT declaring Albania though occupied by German troops now independent and requesting Turkish patronage enable her participate post war international conferences on Balkans especially concerning federation. Letter thought also to request Turkish recognition of present Albanian Government...

Stated Government opposed to Germans but unable to expel them and unwilling involve country in further sacrifices until

archic regime of Zog after Liberation. To this end he held several secret meetings with German military representatives and representatives of the quisling prime minister, Mehdi Bey Frashëri. He established close accord with them on condition that they did not expose him. But it was in vain for Bazi to try to avoid being seen as a collaborator with the Germans, who supplied him with weapons and money and openly permitted him to print his wretched newspaper «Atdheu» in Malosmani's printery in Tirana. This organ of the Zogite Legaliteti circulated everywhere without hindrance. Hence, in principle the Germans and Mehdi Bey and company had agreed that Zog should be returned to Albania. Britain, too, supported this aim, indeed it was its idea. As became apparent later, Britain had certainly been negotiating with Zog for some time. Major

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Allied landing. MEHDI constant touch with ABAS KUPI and entire country would support Allied Forces...

RAGIP said MEHDI wished to assist Allies secretly and expressed readiness to convey any special messages... He alleges Germans totally ignorant of letter to President and requests greatest secrecy.»

And Boxshall adds:

«Cairo authorized Istanbul to pass a message back to Mehdi Frashëri to the effect that a British liaison officer conversant with Albanian matters would shortly be sent to Albania. Mehdi Frashëri would be at liberty to communicate with this officer through Kupi.» *(FO 371/43550-3372, PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

McLean's departure from the General Staff of our National Liberation Army and his subsequent attachment *incognito* to Bazi i Canës confirmed this. McLean became Bazi's direct link with London and Zog. He guided Bazi and operated with him and the other bajraktars against our movement and army. McLean supplied the Zogite reaction with «St. George's cavalry» (**1**), with weapons, munitions, clothing and food. Our General Staff had information that a British military mission headed by McLean and Amery was attached to the band of Abaz Kupi and the bajraktars round him.

We observed also, that Bazi i Canës, like a bandit, like a bajraktar, was creating certain military and political organs. He created a so-called Supreme Staff and placed at the head of it one of Zog's ex-officers, a certain Jahja Çaçi, who had been on our side at first, but later went over to Bazi. To go with this formal organ, formal because this «Supreme Staff» was not for war against the Germans but a Supreme Staff for «killing chickens», Bazi i Canës also created a so-called political base. With some reactionary chiefs and bajraktars he held the «congress» of Legaliteti in November 1943, which set itself the task of alienating the people from the Communist Party, uniting them around itself and re-establishing the monarchy headed by Zog. This so-

1 Gold sovereigns.

called congress was held at Zall-Herr under the nose of the German Gestapo, which «closed its eyes» to this activity. At that so-called congress, which had been hatched up by the British and the Germans in silent collaboration, a fact that is more than clear to us, McLean was present.

Bazi i Canës, this representative of the Zogites, now began openly to hold meetings with the bajraktars of the North, naturally to unite them against us and have them ready to support Zog in the near future. This was the task which the British Intelligence Service had set him. The plan had been worked out carefully.

My forebodings about the British missions were being proved correct, one after the other.

The British General Davies had come to arrange compromise and conciliation between us, on the one hand, and the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites, on the other. I rejected and denounced this plan. And I was not mistaken in my judgement. Although the General encountered the resolute stand of our Party and the National Liberation Front, he did not lay down his arms, but did everything possible to realize his plans. It was absolutely essential for him to meet the agent of the British, «Mr. Kupi». I received reports that a scion of the Memaj family had come to General Davies allegedly to bring him eggs and in the basket of eggs he also had a letter from Abaz Kupi for the General. At this time

Frederik had gone with Nicholls to Orenja to arrange their winter quarters and, since our liaison officer was not there to hinder him, the General went stealthily to meet Abaz Kupi in Shëngjergj.

Their meeting had not lasted long. The apprentice rendered account to his master and reported to him on his «valiant deeds» and his plans for the future. After tossing him a bag of gold coins, the General gave the «minor Zog» fresh instructions. One of the main demands of Bazi i Canës was that Zog should send a message of congratulations from London on the work which was being done in his name and for him. Bazi i Canës and all the reaction in Albania needed this badly to encourage their followers and intimidate us. Apparently they also agreed there that they should go together to talk with the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar, although Bazi i Canës placed no hopes in them.

In the talks which the British General had with the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar and Bazi, undoubtedly he reached some conclusions of interest to him. One of them was that these two groups must be reconciled, organized and strengthened for the sake of the future. Thus, those who would collaborate with the Germans and those who were under the direction of the British were to co-ordinate their activities in order to fight the National Liberation Movement more

effectively. Of course, the decisive role in the future would be played by Britain and those who were under its direction, that is, Zog would be the decisive trump card.

What the agent of the British, Mustafa Gjinishi, said to me, that the National Liberation Front should send representatives to London to talk with the British government, made the situation even clearer to us. Davies' plan was that a «coalition» between the National Liberation Front and black reaction should be formed in London.

As I have explained, the General and his superiors in London took a knock-back with our reply, since their agent Mustafa Gjinishi had certainly made his report to them. The way in which the General worked did not surprise us. He considered us enemies, while he considered the quislings, the Zogites and the Balli Kombëtar allies of Britain, and it was on them that Britain hoped to rely in the future to establish its influence in our country.

The situation created in Albania compelled General Davies to decide to go to London to report on the work he had done, and that is why he was so insistent on going to Korça. I have spoken earlier in these memoirs about this and about the fierce quarrel we had. Without doubt the General wanted to go from Korça to Greece and then to London. This was my initial

deduction. Seeing how events developed later, I arrived at the conclusion that the German offensive to encircle our General Staff and wipe out the leadership of the Party and our army and the surrender of the British General without firing a shot, although the partisans led by Baba Faja did everything possible to get him out of the encirclement, might have been a plan hatched up by the British, the Germans and internal reaction. There is no other explanation for the General's words: «You are finished, you have lost the war, surrender!» However, we foiled their plan and acted in such a way that we broke through the encirclement without great losses.

Abaz Kupi had had enough of operating against us under cover and was now coming out openly. Three times we called him to meetings and he did not come. It was time to settle matters with him because the cup was filled to overflowing. We sent him a final warning to come to a meeting in Shëngjergj of Tirana district in the first week of December. Finally he agreed. We decided that I should go to the meeting with two or three comrades. Regardless of the danger we went and met him. In order to show that we were friends and had no reason to be afraid of him, we took along only five or six people. This was risky because we knew what a criminal he was, but it was necessary to do this for the sake of his rank-and-file followers. If

Bazi was not going to change his course, we had to expose him. In fact, the way in which we acted was bold, because all around the house where we held the meeting, the old wolf had placed many hardened criminals and killers who were members of his bands. But after all we had our two hands to defend ourselves.

The talks, which I will try to reproduce here, although I might leave something out because it is a long time ago, began and ended in a tense atmosphere.

Abaz Kupi began, «I come to this meeting with the National Liberation Party as a patriot, as representative of the 'Legaliteti Movement', which is the party of His Majesty Zog I.»

He did not even blush or go pale. He thought that with such a pompous declaration he would convince us that we had to talk with him as an equal. He forgot that we had long since written him off, but were concerned about the others who were still deceived by his words.

«The King is a convinced democrat of unrivalled generosity since he permits other democratic parties and even deigns to recognize the so-called 'National Liberation Party' within the 'Legaliteti Movement',» he said.

So he had gone as far as that. He wanted to put us in our place.

«But what does this mean? You are still a member of the National Liberation General Coun-

cil, Mr. Abaz,» we said. «Do you realize that you are violating the oath which you have taken before the flag and the National Liberation Council? Don't forget that the Albanian never breaks his word.»

We saw that he was stuck for a reply and shot a quick glance around his associates. As usual Murat Basha was sitting a little behind him to his left. On his right sat the bajraktar Bilal Kola, whose expression changed from time to time, but he did not open his mouth during the whole meeting.

«I officially left that Council since November. This you must know because I have proclaimed it openly and honestly,» he replied.

«You excluded yourself *de facto* long ago, Abaz Kupi, and you have been operating by stealth, especially following the capitulation of Italy,» we told him.

«That's not true,» he protested, «and what's more, after the capitulation of Italy it was I who fought at Kruja.

Abaz Kupi was telling unashamed lies. He thought that with protest and with such «proofs» he could undermine our position.

«As to where you were when the fighting was going on in Kruja, that you know yourself,» we said. «The people saw with their own eyes who did the fighting there. It was the partisan

çetas led by Haxhi Lleshi that shed their blood. You arrived at the end just to appear as a 'liberator'.»

Although Bazi i Canës was a man without schooling and without culture, he had acquired the ability of a fox that senses imminent danger and tries to dodge it. During the talk he twisted and turned just as he had done throughout his whole life. But this time the fox was caught in the trap and could not get away. All he could do was to try to jump from point to point.

«It is true that I have been cool towards the Council,» he jumped from the theme of the fighting in Kruja to that of his stand towards the Council, «but I have had reasons for this. This has been the case since the meeting at Labinot, because I saw there that it was guided simply by communist principles. This I could not accept.»

«That is not the reason,» we said. «Why did you not come and open your heart to us? Three times we have asked you to come and talk, but you have made no move to do so. What do you call this? In our ranks there are nationalists, too. They are not communists, but they certainly fight, not alone, but together with us. Albania does not belong only to the communists but also to the patriotic nationalists and the whole people. We must all rise and fight. But in order to win, we must be united like a fist. Don't forget what you did in Mukje. The honest nationalists are

not dodgers like some; they do not collaborate with the enemy like some others. You ought to know what is in store for the collaborators.»

The old fox understood the allusion and jumped up as if he had been pricked:

«I have helped you with money which I received from my friends and collaborators, from officers and N.C.O.'s of the gendarmerie, and others, however you have rewarded this aid with bullets to the head, as you did with Idhomene Kosturi.»

How far away from the aim of our war was Abaz Kupi! He came out in defence of elements who were patriots only in name, but who, in fact, were collaborators with the occupiers. In short he admitted from his own mouth what he was and what company he kept.

«Bazi i Canës,» we said, «you are turning out to be different from what we thought you were. How dare you defend those who cannot be defended, try to wash those who cannot be washed? Even the sea could not wash them clean. What do you think, should we not kill the spies, the traitors and the henchmen of Mehdi Bey, who pursue us day and night? You say that they are collaborators of yours. Have you forgotten that they collaborate with the Germans, too? Idhomene Kosturi, whom you say was a patriot, was appointed chairman of the 'Assembly' which was created under the shadow of Hitlerite bayo-

nets. All right then, tell us openly, Abaz, which side are you on?»

«Which side am I on? Why do you ask me? This is an accusation of betrayal,» he shouted and jumped to his feet. «Have you forgotten my patriotism? Have you forgotten April 7, 1939, when I greeted the Italians with the rifle?»

«Calm down, don't be so hasty, Abaz,» we said, «because we know about your patriotism. We know that you fired a few shots, although that was not from love for the Homeland, but to give your master, Ahmet Zog, who had sucked the blood of the people and betrayed them, who stole the gold, the sweat and the blood of the people, time to get away. You fought just long enough for him to get across the border, then you cleared out, too. That is the truth about your 'fight' and everybody knows it.»

It was the first time that this had been said to his face. Who did not know his «patriotism» now! He remained standing, his features contorted, and finally said in a low voice as if talking to himself:

«I have fought and will fight not only until Albania is liberated from the occupiers, but until all the territories inhabited by our Albanian brothers are liberated.»

«The Albanian people have fresh in their memories how the 'legal' regime liberated their

brothers. You remember very well that 'His Majesty', who was returned to power with the aid of white guard mercenaries whom Serbia gave him, handed Shën Naum and Vermosh to the Serbian King as a sign of his gratitude. That's the sort of 'liberation' that you of Legaliteti mean. You. have always pursued a personal policy as a bajraktar and have never carried out the tasks with which the National Liberation Council has charged you.»

«I have declared that I united with you only to fight the enemy.»

«That's what you said. But when are you going to fight? Forget the fighting in Kruja. It was not you but others who fought there. Not only are you not fighting, but you are raising obstacles to us. With your stand you are preventing a whole zone from being totally engaged against the enemy. Is this not sabotage? And what have you to say about the sabotage of national liberation councils, especially in Kruja and Mat?»

«Why do you speak to me in such a tone? You speak as if I have done these things. The people themselves do not accept the councils because they have realized that they do not have the nationalist spirit, that you want to use them to get power into your own hands. Albania has no need for another regime. The regime of the monarchy, headed by Zog, is legal and that is

beyond dispute. The return of His Majesty is essential to restore the honour of Albania which a foreign state has violated. Don't forget that the Great Powers are for this, too. Recently His Majesty has had a twenty-minute meeting with Mr. Churchill.»

«As to what regime will be established after the war in Albania, we have proclaimed publicly that the people themselves will decide the form of the regime. But we want to add just this: The time of King Zog is over. Call him your King if you wish. Today we are fighting for an independent, democratic people's Albania, free from fascism. How a foreign state, which you don't even name, ousted Zog and how he fled, these things you know very well. As for the meeting you mentioned, you and everyone else should understand that Zog can talk day by day with Churchill, if he wishes, about the question of Albania, but neither the one nor the other can decide its fate. It is the people, only the Albanian people, it is we who will decide, and none else, either about the war or about the regime in the future,» I said in a loud voice. Bazi's face went pale and moved his right hand a little. His adjutants sitting on both sides of him prepared themselves for any eventuality, but we did not waver. We had taken everything into account. «Legaliteti has created çetas of brigands,» I continued, «who haven't fired a shot against the occupiers, but

are waiting 'till the time comes' and meanwhile Albania is going through its darkest days.»

«If we had waited 'till the time comes', we would not have fought at Qafështama and disarmed the Italians there,» he tried to object.

«In this, too, you acted according to your own desire, to take the limelight and, first of all, for prey, for booty,» I replied. «At Qafështama, the Italians were no more than a dead horse and you and your brigands stripped it of its shoes. That's the extent of your 'valour', and even this you did outside the orders of the Staff. Likewise, without the knowledge or authority of the Presidium of the National Liberation General Council and taking advantage of your position as a member of it, you went to Lura where, together with Mithat Frashëri, you organized the meeting with the reactionary bajraktars who are linked hand and foot with the occupiers. We summoned you to explain your actions about this, but you did not deign to come.»

«Mithat Frashëri sent me a letter about the meeting at Lura. I went to Lura and there I was charged with mediating among the gentry of Dibra in order to unite them with us. They are patriots and want to fight for Albania,» he said.

«What sort of patriots are they when they have united with the occupiers? You knew this, and despite that you met them and talked to them. What sort of unity can there be with such

people? Everyone understands clearly that there can be no unity against the occupier outside the National Liberation Movement. Only this Movement represents the Albanian people. Only the national liberation councils are organs of the war and the sole power that expresses the will of the people. Any 'government' or other organization outside this Movement cannot be other than an instrument of compromise and betrayal,» I said.

Frequently, when he was opposing me, Bazi raised his voice and approached the window which had been left open deliberately so that the armed peasants of his band, who were outside in the yard, could hear what he said and be convinced about what a «great leader» he was, and what declarations he made in their «defence». On one occasion, speaking in a loud voice, Bazi stood up and said to me:

«Listen. Mr. Hoxha. Not you communists but the regime of Zog will do many good things for the people, will open schools, will not levy heavy taxes and will give the peasants land.»

But I, too, stood up and replied in an even louder voice, directed towards the window:

«Listen, Mr. Kupi. The poor peasants will get land only from us, from the people's state power which will be established after liberation. They will never get it from the Zogites, because in all the 15 years he was in power, Zog never thought of doing such a thing for them and only

deceived them by saying that he was going to carry out the 'agrarian reform.' He could never have done it because it would have been suicide for him. Those who are not on the course of the National Liberation Movement are on a course which sooner or later will certainly land them in the lap of the enemies of the Movement, the enemies of our people, and if they get in our way, we shall attack them and wipe them out,» I concluded.

This was a stern trial, which exposed him.

Thus we ended the meeting with Abaz Kupi and took our departure. Since that time I never again set eyes on him.

We immediately held a special meeting of the Presidium, expelled him from its ranks and the same day drafted the resolution in which we reported on the meeting with Abaz Kupi, about the efforts we made to convince him to change his course, and finally the need to unmask him before the people.

Immediately after the meeting with Kupi, General Davies appeared on the scene. I guessed that he wanted to find out something about the meeting and I was not mistaken. For the first time he did not beat about the bush but immediately got down to business:

«You have had a talk with Mr. Kupi,» said the General. «Could you tell me how it went, Mr. Hoxha?»

I explained to the General: «For a long time we had been asking him to define his attitude towards the Balli Kombëtar, the quisling government and the German occupiers. However, he always refused to condemn them. On the contrary, we have accurate information that he is collaborating with them to the detriment of our war and moreover in the meeting with us he spoke well of them.»

«Mr. Kupi had promised me that he would clear up these problems, indeed he told me he would fight,» interjected the British General.

«Yes,» I said. «Just as the heads of the Balli Kombëtar promised you. Indeed, as you told us, they even made you a declaration in writing, did they not? What are their promises worth? Do you see what they are doing? Abaz Kupi is just like them. Therefore, the National Liberation General Council has removed him from its midst and warned him that if he continues on the course he has begun, we shall attack him.»

«Mr. Hoxha,» said the General, «I must beg you to use your influence in the Council so that it gives Kupi a little longer to clear up his stand, because I shall talk with him again.»

«We have waited long enough,» I cut him short. «For a long time he has been putting forward as the immediate issue not the liberation but the regime. This matter is now closed. The decision has been taken. We are left with

no alternative but to watch his activity closely and to attack him at the first opportunity. He'll get his deserts.»

Seeing our determination, the General took his leave and departed. The plan that their agent should remain amongst us to trip us up had failed.

The great German-Ballist offensive in the severe winter of 1943-1944 was launched against our forces who were ill-clad and hungry. This helped Abaz Kupi to gain ground. For him this was an «Indian summer» amidst the icy winter. He deceived himself that this was everything and that victory was smiling on him. Through the British officers, Bazi once again repeated his requests that «His Majesty» should send a message(**1**)from London in which he would declare

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1 A letter from Talbot Rice sent to Howard on February 24, 1944, says:

«Pursuant to the decision taken at our meeting on Thursday, 17th February we approached Zog with a request for a letter to Abas Kupi. In the course of the conversation which Major McLean had with him, he showed himself most willing to help...» *(FO 371/43550-3373. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana).* Meanwhile a report from Sargent sent to the Secretary of State on February 29, 1944, says: «...Maclean went off, saw King Zog and obtained the desired letter... Its text is not however entirely satisfactory and if it is to be used we shall have to get it changed. We discussed the text with S.O.E. at another meeting on the 28th February and agreed on a revised draft which is attached. It

that he was ready to return to Albania. Indeed, he propagated far and wide that Zog I had met Churchill, who had allegedly promised that the most powerful monarchy in the world would do everything in its power to restore him to the throne.

Through the Zavalanis (**1**) and other announcers of his type we heard rumours that the opinion of Fan Noli had been sought about the creation of a government in exile headed by Zog and that Noli had agreed with this and promised to act as adviser to it! (**2**) The yellow newspaper

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you agree I should like to tell Maclean that he may now go back to Zog and ask him to amend the letter on the lines agreed...

If after his return to Albania, Maclean considers that Zog's letter would be of use, and we authorise him to give it to Abas Kupi, we will consider getting Tito to use his influence with the LNC at the same time.» *(FO 371 43550-3372. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

1 Refers to T. Zavalam, a reactionary Albanian intellectual in the service of the British. He worked in the B.B.C. to prepare broadcasts in the Albanian language.

2 In reply to the letter which S. Martini [«chamberlain of the court»] sent to Fan Noli in the name of Zog on April 7, 1943, in connection with the creation of an Albanian government in which he said, «the King would be pleased to see your Eminence at the head of this Government.» *(FO 371/37136-3634. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)* Fan Noli wrote on May 27, 1943: «I am ready to do my full share... under King Zog's leadership... I must make

Atdheu even published the message which Noli sent to Cordell Hull (**1**). When we heard of this, at first we did not believe it. It was unbelievable to us that this stern opponent of Zog could sit down at the same table with him to consider the fate of Albania! It seemed to us impossible that Noli could reconcile himself to the murderer of Avni Rustemi and Bajram Curri, Luigj Gurakuqi and Riza Cerova, to the person who had caused hundreds of Sons of the Eagle to wander through Europe without home or possessions, pursued by the henchmen of Zog. It seemed to us astonishing that Noli could throw out a lifeline to rescue the pitiless feudal despot who had sucked the blood of the Albanian people for 15 years on end. Regrettably, however, as was proved later, there was some truth in what we heard.

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it quite clear that I can serve only in an advisory capacity on account of my American citizenship...» *(FO 371/37137-3643. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

1 According to this newspaper, dated October 12, 1943. Noli wrote to Hull among other things: «... it would be to the advantage of the United Nations to officially recognize King Zog and give him the opportunity to play his personal role to accelerate the victory which we are all awaiting. King Zog is better able to work for the Allies than any other Albanian or group of Albanians... Some sincere opponents of King Zog who have suffered for years in exile on account of their opposition, think that it is in the interest of both parties, the United Nations and Albania, to have an officially recognized government in exile under King Zog...»

As to the circumstances in which this had come about and what motives impelled Noli, this we do not know. The fact is that he did such a thing, notwithstanding that the plan for the formation of a government in exile could never be put into practice.

While reaction abroad was preparing the bridal party to bring Zog to Albania, reaction within the country was making a come-back. Great publicity was built up around the figure of Zog. Under the protection of Hitlerite bayonets, the gendarmerie was being reorganized as in the period prior to April 7 and even adopted the Zogite form of salute. After a secret meeting with Xhafer Deva in a village of Kruja, Abaz Kupi linked up with the nazi General Schmoll in order to wipe out the National Liberation Army. Their collaboration went so far that when the Germans took some of our men prisoner, they advised them to join the ranks of Herr Kupi's «army» if they wanted to save their necks. Leaflets, *Atdheu* and other yellow papers were circulated in the cities to deceive the people, to boost the Zogites' courage and hopes, to arouse panic among the masses and to confuse them with the spectre of Zog, with the ultimate aim of diverting them from the right road.

In regard to the rumours that we heard from London, we demanded insistently that the British mission either declare itself in favour

of them, or if they were not true, inform London that it should deny them publicly. After some time London tried to deny these rumours through a leaflet which Major Tilman issued in Gjirokastra.

It was the end of April 1944. Mustafa Kaçaçi, commissar of the Battalion of Mat, informed me by letter that the agent of the British Intelligence Service, McLean, had appeared again in those parts. «He is heading a British mission attached to Abaz Kupi, who is being supplied by air with so much material that some of it falls into the hands of gendarmes and some is sold on the market on which we have frequently bought,» he wrote.

As soon as I read the letter, I remembered the words of Davies at our first meeting in Labinot when he told us that by the end of November McLean was to go to Cairo, from there to London and possibly would personally inform Churchill about the situation in Albania. And now, having completed the «course», McLean had been dropped back into Albania, this time with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He had gone to the close friend of the British with new instructions in order to give a further impulse to the plans of London. The fact that a British mission was attached to Bazi i Canës, that they were supplying him with ample money and material, that the British propaganda was building up the

figure of Abaz Kupi, as well as the German-Ballist operation against our army, made the «minor Zog» feel himself at the culmination of his power and joy and he crowed and strutted like a rooster on a dungheap.

Not content with his underhand deals with the British, Abaz Kupi also attempted to link up with Greek reaction. Together with the Balli Kombëtar and the quisling officials in Tirana, he began to dig another grave for our country, this time starting not from the north, as in 1924, but from the south. To Athens, Mithat Frashëri sent Dhimitër Fallo, Mehdi Frashëri sent his personal spokesman, Xhevat Leskoviku, while Abaz Kupi «authorized» as the delegate of Legaliteti the former prime minister of the government of Ahmet Zog, Koço Kota, to conclude an agreement with Ralis and Zervas of Greece under which they would jointly drown in blood the national liberation movements of both the Albanian and the Greek peoples. The intention was that this agreement would later be turned into a Greek-Turkish-Albanian alliance. However, their mission failed. The documents, whereby the Central Committee of the Balli Kombëtar and the quisling government accredited Dhimitër Fallo as delegate in the talks with the Greek reactionaries, were captured by our partisans, and the «delegate» was put on trial and condemned in the summer of 1944.

This was the situation of Abaz Kupi's «heroes» and «headquarters» before the offensive of our 1st Division in Central and Northern Albania. Their «Indian summer» was coming to an end. The British lamp was running out of oil.

After the Congress of Përmet I gave orders for the brigades of the 1st Division to cross to the zones beyond the Shkumbin, to attack the Germans and together with the partisan forces fighting in these zones, to clear Central and Northern Albania, to strike mortal blows at reaction, to set up the people's power of the national liberation councils and increase the ranks of the National Liberation Army with new detachments. With this action we were striking right at the heart of the British plans against us. Zogite reaction was at its last gasp. The shadow of death was spreading over it. Our forces were marching towards Mat and Mirdita where the Zogites and other reactionaries were cowering. The whole population of the North rose in support of the National Liberation Army.

At the beginning of July 1944, the British liaison officer sought an urgent meeting(**1**)with me. I received him.

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1 In the book *Sons of the Eagle,* writing about a meeting with the reactionary chiefs, J. Amery says:

«The news of the Partisan attack had taken the life out

«I have received a message from the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters in which it demands that you stop your attacks against Abaz Kupi and others in the North, who are patriots and our friends, or otherwise aid to you will be cut off,» he said.

«Our Division has received orders to clear the North of the Germans, mercenaries and traitors, to establish the state power of the national liberation councils there and to engage the people in the war against the occupiers,» I replied.

«But it is approaching Mat which is the territory in which Mr. Kupi operates,» he said.

«Mat is part of Albania, why should we not go through it?» I replied curtly. «No one has the right to prevent our Division from performing its duty. There is no reason why this should be linked with the question of material aid from the Allies. Abaz Kupi was a member of the Presidium of the National Liberation General Council and our Staff, but he turned against the

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of our meeting, but we sat down for a formal discussion beneath a tall and spreading oak: Abaz Kupi, Muharrem Bajraktar, Sait Kryeziu, Maclean; Smiley; and I. Meanwhile the lesser chiefs and their retainers stood around us in a ring. There could be no question now of calling for a general revolt of the Ghegs, but each of the leaders spoke in turn.. - appealing to us to intervene und bring about a truce.» *Sons of the Eagle, London, MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1948, p. 202.*

National Liberation Movement, therefore, he has been expelled from those bodies and has been branded a traitor. This you know very well.»

«Mr. Kupi complains that the Division has given him an ultimatum that he must surrender to them or otherwise they will attack him. He has been given no period of grace.»

«We gave him a year to declare himself for or against us. You, too, have been waiting a long time, but now we can wait no longer. He is collaborating with the Germans and is sabotaging the war, our strategic plan and that of the allies.»

Two days later the British liaison officer came to me again and said:

«Mr. Hoxha, Allied Headquarters has transmitted to me a note from General Wilson to you.»

«What does the note say?» I asked without the slightest sign of concern because I could guess what that note was likely to contain. The offensive of our Division in the North was treading on their corns.

«The note raises three questions,» said the British officer. «First, General Wilson does not allow your partisans to be involved in his strategic plans and he will not tolerate civil war in his theatre of operations.»

«This is impermissible interference. What makes General Wilson think there is civil war going on here? The only war being waged in

our country is against the occupiers and their collaborators such as the Balli Kombëtar, the reactionary chiefs of Dibra and Abaz Kupi with his brigands. Next point, please,» I said.

«The second point has to do with aid. The note says that if you attack Mr. Kupi, aid will be cut off and without allied aid you cannot withstand the Germans.»

«Let the General and everybody else understand thoroughly,» I replied there and then, «that we did not begin the war because the allies were engaged in it. We began it before they entered the war, moreover, without aid from them or anyone else. We should be given their aid because this is in the interest of the allies. If their aid is made conditional on our attitude towards the traitors we shall continue the war just as we started it. But carry on, tell me the rest,» I said without glancing at him.

«Third, the note says also that unless assurances are given that Mr. Kupi will not be attacked, the National Liberation Movement cannot send delegates to Allied Headquarters in Italy,» concluded the British liaison officer.

«The sending of our delegation to meet the representatives of the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters can never be linked with the question of Abaz Kupi. For us the question of Abaz Kupi no longer exists. This matter was decided once and for all in December last year when we

settled accounts with him. The Congress of Përmet also sealed his doom. Our delegation will go there to establish a more complete agreement with the allies and regardless of your threat, Mr. Officer of our British ally, our division will continue about its business,» I concluded.

«At least wait five days,» pleaded the British officer.

«No,» I replied, «we've waited long enough. Like you, we have waited long enough,» I repeated. «No one has the right to stop us carrying on the war to clear Mat of collaborators of the Germans. Not even General Wilson can stop us. This is improper interference,» I stressed. «Let us suppose that Bazi i Canës is not a traitor, as you claim. Then why does he sit doing nothing, and does not fight the occupiers, but instead, together with them, has turned his rifle against our National Liberation Army? Do we not have the right and the duty to engage the district of Mat, too, in the war against the Germans? We are in our own land and we shall act according to the interests of this land. Why is General Wilson interfering in this way? We shall continue to carry out our strategic plan to the letter and this is also in favour of the allied strategy. These are not just my personal opinions but also the opinions of our General Staff, and this you understand very well,» I pointed out to the British officer. «However, since this note, which

I want in writing, comes from General Wilson, I shall refer it to the Presidium of the National Liberation General Council.»

The officer handed me the written note. In his presence I glanced over it quickly and noticed that in the third question there was some difference from what he told me orally. This annoyed me, but I controlled myself and said to him:

«Please, will you come to receive the reply when I notify you?»

«Whenever you say,» he replied and left.

I immediately called the Presidium together.

«We are holding this meeting because of the intervention of the Allied Headquarters to stop the operations of our Division in the North,» I told the comrades. «As you know, after the German June operation, our forces received orders to launch an offensive in Central and Northern Albania and today they are engaged in fierce fighting in those regions against the Germans, mercenaries and gendarmes who are beginning to panic. Our forces are driving towards Dibra and Mat to settle accounts finally with the enemy. Apparently, however, this is very painful to the British. General Wilson expresses this in a note which he has sent me.»

I read the note and told them everything the British officer had said and what I had said in reply.

«The British have made efforts to get Bazi

i Canës into our ranks again, (**1**)» I continued, «but have run into the resistance of reaction, so their 'sit-on-the-fence' attitude continues to this day. Now Bazi can no longer be included amongst us, cannot be united with us, because he is up to his elbows in filth. All this reaction from the British arises from the fact that their plans are failing. They urged Abaz Kupi to enter into discussions with our Staff, setting the condition that they should be held with Mustafa Gjinishi, Dr. Dishnica and Sejfulla and eventually even with me, if they could not avoid me. However, we did not agree, because those talks would have been a game they wanted to play to the detriment of our war. As you know, this game is being played in Greece in order to split the EAM

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1 The Foreign Office radiogram No. 174 sent to Steel in Cairo on February 6, 1944 said:

«We have recently seen Maclean's report on Albania and discussed it with him.

His main recommendation is that the L.N.C. movement should be broadened to include as many nationalists as possible. His idea is that Abas Kupi, Zog's representative... should return to the L.N.C....

2. As practical steps to this end, Maclean proposes:

(1) that we should sound Zog to see if he would agree;

(2) that we should get Liaison officer to put proposal to Abas Kupi; and

(3) that we should get Tito (through Brigadier Maclean) to influence L.N.C. to agree to return of Abas Kupi.» *(Outward telegram No. 174, FO 371/43549-3336. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

and infiltrate reactionary elements into its ranks. They see clearly what the National Liberation Movement is and want to hold it back in order to allow the reactionary elements time to break away from the occupiers and enter our ranks in disguise.

«The British have engaged in another manoeuvre, too,» I continued. «They want to present our war as a local movement in the South while, in their view, in the North there are only Zog, Bazi and so on, and they are trying to compel us to accept these elements as co-fighters. The British have done the same sort of thing in Greece; they have played this game with the EAM, too, in which they wanted to put Zervas. But Zervas remained linked with Ralis and the occupier. The Anglo-American allies wanted the EAM to refrain from attacking the zones where Zervas operated because they wanted to have him as a reserve force. This is the aim of the British with Bazi i Canës here, too, and in order to back up this 'argument', they have begun to bring out from the archives and transmit over the radio our articles which call for unity. However, they forget that the times have changed, that the traitors are deep in the mire.

«London's aim,» I told the comrades, «is that even if they can't get Abaz Kupi to do some fighting just for appearances' sake, at least to hold him in reserve for the future. We are fight-

ing Bazi simply as a traitor and collaborator of the Germans. The fight against him and the whole of reaction is not a 'civil war', as General Wilson wants to call it for his own sinister aims. In no way will we allow him to interfere in our internal affairs. We are on the right road. No one can change our opinion about this or that reactionary element like Bazi and the others, because we have facts, documents which we have also sent to the allies in Bari and London. They are exerting this pressure on us precisely at this time because the historic decisions of the Congress of Përmet have hurt them badly. This is the truth of the matter. We shall not waver even a millimetre from our correct line, therefore I think we should send them the answer they deserve.»

We discussed the problem at length in the meeting of the Presidium. In their contributions, the comrades indignantly rejected General Wilson's claim and fully supported what I had said. Sejfulla Malëshova alone engaged in some philosophizing, «advising» us that «we should be more precise in some expressions and distinguish between the policy of Great Britain and the allies, and that of British reaction in the mission here, in Cairo and elsewhere.» In the form of a reproach he continued, «We must convince the allies of what the situation is in Albania. We have sent them documents, but this is insufficient.» He spoke as if he did not know of

the repeated clashes we had had with them. He closed his contribution, which was full of his arrogance, by assuring us like «a great prophet» that «the allies are bound to come to a satisfactory understanding with us.» This philosophizing was the prelude to the pro-Western attitude and views of Sejfulla Malëshova which were to assume scandalous proportions a year later.

«We know the policy of Great Britain very well and also know its aims,» I said in my reply to Malëshova. «We know how to make that distinction about which you spoke, but unfortunately there is no such distinction. The representatives of London, here, in Cairo or in Bari, carry out the orders of their centre fanatically and we are all witnesses to that. We have repaid any obligation towards them many times over, while making it clear to them that they should remain true allies, but they have always tried to interfere in our affairs. The comrades are well aware of this and there is no need to list the facts. Churchill and his envoys here are pursuing diabolical aims towards our National Liberation Movement but, as the other comrades said, we do not fear or submit to their pressure. We shall continue to perform our duty to the people and our Homeland to the end.»

The Presidium decided unanimously that a clear-cut reply should be drafted and sent to Ge-

neral Wilson. The document which we compiled in essence had this content: «There are no quarrels, let alone civil war, in Albania. There is only one war in Albania, the war against the occupier and its tools, the local traitors such as the Balli Kombëtar, Legaliteti, Abaz Kupi, the bands of Shevqet Vërlaci and the 'chiefs' of Dibra who collaborate directly with the German Command here. We do not accept orders from anybody about liberating our Homeland from the occupiers and traitors. Albania is our Homeland and the people are the masters of it. If Britain has friends, these must be from our side; those who are with the Germans are our enemies and enemies of our allies, therefore we shall fight them to the end. We regret to tell you that we cannot accept your request.» This is how we concluded our reply.

I summoned Palmer, acquainted him with the content of our letter of reply and handed it to him. «That's another slap in the face of the British,» I said to myself. Their ideas and aims were clear to us and this flagrant interference in our affairs, in particular, proved that we were right.

Meanwhile I wrote to the comrades of the 1st Division that General Wilson was continuing his pressure to stop the fighting against Abaz Kupi and to bring about reconciliation with him and that we had resolutely rejected his pressure. I

also informed them that Bazi had been invited to go to Italy. He had agreed and was preparing to go by sea, while we agreed in principle to go to talks in Bari about collaborating with the allies, but in no way would we go there together with Abaz Kupi. «Continue your attacks on the forces of Legaliteti,» I ordered them. «Mat and Dibra must be traversed several times and the forests thoroughly searched, while the reactionary chiefs of Dibra must be attacked just as fiercely.»

We were receiving a great deal of information about the movements of British officers. McLean was travelling all over the North of Albania and likewise Smith, who was attached to the Staff of the 1st Division of our army. They gathered information and organized meetings with the reactionary chiefs. However, what concerned me most was our lack of tight security. We had captured German documents which described the positions of our brigades in detail. I was also aware that somebody was feeding information on secret matters to the British officers, especially Major Smith. Liri Gega was an admirer of Smith. Amongst other things, he encouraged her careerism, with which she was badly infected even without his encouragement, as well as her unhealthy ambition, especially for promotion to general on which she had her eye and had said explicitly: «Why can't women be gen-

erals, too?» Liri Gega had a crush on Smith, about whom she frequently said: «He's a clever devil.» Apparently, they «cried on each other's shoulders.»

Liri Gega had the habit of using uncoded radiograms with us of the General Staff, informing us openly where she was, what she was doing, etc., and I took the opportunity to point out to her what could occur as a result of carelessness and lack of secrecy. I wrote to her: «In a top secret radiogram I informed you about the creation of the 1st Army Corps and instructed you that this should be announced only when the 6th Brigade and the staff of the 2nd Division arrived there, while Smith, the British officer attached to you, learned this immediately.» I asked her to inform me urgently from whom the British officer had obtained this information. She did not reply. With a second radiogram I ordered her to reply to me on this matter. Finally she informed me that Tuk Jakova, the commissar of the 1st Division, had given the British major the information about the formation of the 1st Army Corps. As was proved later, however, Liri had told him this first and Tuk later.

Once again I issued a clear order about relations with the foreign missions, repeated that only the authorized persons should maintain contact with them and not anybody at all, and

these authorized persons must be very cautious in their conversations with them. I instructed the command of the 1st Division not to enter into conversation with the British officers attached to Abaz Kupi and other reactionary forces, and if they captured them, to send them under partisan escort to our General Staff. I pointed out to this Command, especially to Liri Gega, who without our knowledge had invited McLean to talks, «Since you have invited him, don't bring him to the Staff on this occasion, but cut short your conversation with him.»

A few days after our reply to the note, Air Vice-Marshal Elliot, commander of the Balkan Air Force, on behalf of the Supreme Allied Mediterranean Commander, General Wilson, sent me a message, no longer in the form of an order and a threat like the note, but in a diplomatic tone, in which the question of cutting off aid was passed over in silence, while the sending of our representatives to Bari to discuss the situation in Albania with his staff was made the central issue. He no longer made Abaz Kupi's participation a condition for the talks, either. Finally, still in diplomatic language, he asked that I should head the delegation. Apparently our categorical reply had obliged them to reflect and they had made a tactical retreat which must not put us to sleep. The fox never forgets its craft.

We decided to send a delegation to Bari. We

also discussed the questions which should be raised. We appointed three people headed by Colonel Bedri Spahiu. We summoned the three and gave them clear-cut orders. «You are to go there as representatives of the General Command of our National Liberation Army and will follow their tactic: you will discuss only military questions and not political problems,» we told them. We made clear to them on what conditions they should talk and instructed them to leave no room for any equivocation. «You will conduct yourselves as representatives of a worthy army which has displayed heroism in our common war against the Axis, and in the talks you will reflect its perfect organization and the strategy and tactics worked out by its General Command. Right from the start you will put forward these requests: Recognition by the allies of the National Liberation Front as the only organization which is fighting the German occupiers in Albania; recognition of the National Liberation Army as the people's army and the only one which is fighting the occupiers; recognition of it as an allied army; recognition of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee as the Provisional Government for the Albanian people for the period of the war; acceptance of a permanent military delegation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army at the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters.

«Insistence on supplying our army with war material will be one of the fundamental problems,» we told the delegation. «You must make clear to them that we demand this as an obligation which results from our contribution and their promise made publicly to participants in the anti-fascist coalition and not as charity. You must stress to them once again that there must be no attempt to use the supply of military materials in order to put pressure on the National Liberation Front with the aim of diverting it from its political and military line. Finally, you must insist that they withdraw their mission attached to Abaz Kupi.»

These were the tasks with which the National Liberation General Council and the General Staff of the National Liberation Army charged our military delegation.

The talks at Bari between our delegation and the delegation of the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters commenced at the end of July of 1944 and continued through August. I maintained continuous communication with our delegation and followed the talks attentively.

The delegation of the Allied Headquarters, which was headed by the British Lord, Lt. Colonel Harcourt and the American Harry Fultz, avoided our demands and put pressure on our representatives to make them accept the conditions which they presented. Great pressure was

exerted on our delegation especially in connection with the question of the distribution of weapons. They insisted that only the British missions in Albania should do this and not our General Staff. They had made a similar demand a year earlier, when McLean was attached to us. Matters reached such a point that they threatened they would break off the talks. Under these threats Bedri Spahiu wavered and sent me a radiogram in which he said: «We insist that you authorize us to conclude the agreement on the British conditions,» because, according to him, what had been achieved was worthwhile.

I replied immediately, telling him not to waver in carrying out the tasks with which we had charged him. «The British conditions are not so favourable that you should insist so strongly on accepting them,» I replied to Bedri. «The breaking off of relations would not be good, but first of all, you must fight to safeguard the independence of our Staff. Try to have the following condition accepted: Some of the material should be distributed by our Staff, where its strategy and tactics require this, while the remainder should likewise be distributed by this Staff, but in consultation with the head of the mission in Albania. Meanwhile the actions will be carried out after our General Staff has studied them and found them possible. Make clear to them once and for all that only our General Staff and

nobody else makes the decisions here.» I again instructed him to insist that the British withdraw their missions attached to Abaz Kupi and the other traitors, and to tell them that only in this way could trust between us be built. «Do not accept lengthy discussion on this matter,» I stressed.

Following these instructions the talks recommenced. Bedri Spahiu, very pleased with himself, reported that, in the end, the general outline of an agreement had been reached under which our National Liberation Army was recognized as the only army which was fighting the Germans in Albania and the allies undertook to supply it with armaments and other military materials, although as is known, they never fully carried out this agreement. He also reported that the proposal that a permanent delegation of the General Staff of the Albanian National Liberation Army should be attached to the Allied Headquarters at Bari had been accepted, while the demand for recognition of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Committee as a Provisional Government had not been accepted by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Mediterranean Forces. In regard to the mission attached to Abaz Kupi they had demanded further proofs allegedly to convince themselves whether or not it should be withdrawn, while the agreement included no decision on the other problems.

Since they did not want to withdraw their mission attached to Abaz Kupi, now it was our turn to act.

I immediately summoned the British liaison officer, attached to the General Staff of our army, Captain Lyon, and communicated to him officially:

«The bandit Abaz Kupi and his associates, in collaboration with the Germans, are attacking us with arms. They are sworn enemies of the people and we shall fight them as such. With Abaz Kupi there is a British political-military mission headed by Lt. — Col McLean and Captain Amery. They have become collaborators with Abaz Kupi and other reactionaries in the organization and leadership of reactionary forces against the National Liberation Front and the National Liberation Army. Their hostile work is so open that McLean and his colleagues were present, arms in hand, in the fighting which the bands of Abaz Kupi waged against the partisan forces.

«This we have pointed out to you many times and have demanded that you put an end to such a situation. You do not want to take any measures in regard to this cynical and villainous act, therefore I am officially communicating to you the decision of the General Command of the Albanian National Liberation Army: 'If the British officers who stay with Abaz Kupi are killed in the fighting to wipe out him and his band, we

accept no responsibility for this. We shall make no distinction between the British officers and bandits like Abaz Kupi. If we capture your officers, we shall not hand them over to you, but will hold them as prisoners of war and hand them over to the partisan court for trial as war criminals who have collaborated with the enemy'.» I stood up and said to the British Captain: «That is all I have to communicate to you.»

The Captain's face was deathly pale.

«General Hoxha,» he said, «this is a harsh and very dangerous decision. I think you ought to withdraw it.»

«I shall not withdraw one comma from it,» I said. «It is up to you to withdraw your missions from the traitor collaborators.»

«Mr. Hoxha, I think you have been misinformed, because McLean's mission could never work against you. Let us try to clear up the matter.»

«What we say is absolutely true. There is no question of misinformation,» I told the British officer. «Transmit this to your command and let it think what it likes, but make clear to it that I shall not budge from my decision. Why do we not make such an accusation against Mr. Palmer, you, or any other British officer? Your command has not thoroughly studied the true reasons for this decision and the real facts which we have presented about these persons on several occa-

sions, therefore our decision will not be altered and cannot be hindered. We shall continue the war against our common enemies. You do not like what I have said to you, because you are not used to having such things said to you about your officers who are acting in this way. But you should not forget that neither do we Albanians allow anybody to climb on our backs. I agree with you that we should maintain sincere relations, because this is in the interests of both sides, but I do not accept in any way that you should give moral and material support and assistance to our enemies, the tools of the occupiers.»

«I shall transmit your decision to my General Headquarters immediately,» said Lyon, and he took his leave and left.

This was the «McLean incident», if we can call it that.

As our delegation at Bari reported to me, Captain Lyon had transmitted this ultimatum that very night to his General Headquarters, which was greatly alarmed and immediately made it the subject of a discussion in the Commission for Political Questions. The day after this news arrived, Air Vice-marshal Elliot had summoned our delegation and in the presence of representatives of McMillan, the resident minister, the representative of Murphy in Bari,

Lord Harcourt, Palmer and several others, had read the radiogram received from Captain Lyon. He told our delegation that this announcement had stunned them and they still did not understand why all this fuss was being made at a time when in the agreement concluded, the question of Abaz Kupi had been left for further discussion. Then he informed them of his answer, with the instruction that they should transmit it to me. Amongst other things he said that he could not permit such demands for the withdrawal of allied officers, and even less, that they should be captured by force and brought to trial by the partisan military court; that I must withdraw the accusations and threats and give a full guarantee that no measures would be taken against the allied officers in Albania; that if they did not get this guarantee they would not carry out the conditions of the agreement and that in operating with Kupi, Lt—Colonel McLean was simply carrying out the orders he had received, and finally, with a diplomatic twist, Elliot said that in these circumstances he had no alternative but to keep the Albanian delegation in Bari, without restricting its freedom of movement, until this question was solved satisfactorily.

Air Vice-marshal Elliot told our delegation that Captain Lyon would be informed about these matters in order to make them known to General Hoxha, without entering into discussion with

him, in order to avoid giving rise to further misunderstanding. Bedri Spahiu briefly transmitted all this to me immediately, and finally, frightened by the situation created, he wrote in the form of a reproach: «You are not fully informed about the cordial agreement we have concluded here,» and continued peremptorily, «if the content of Capt. Lyon's radiogram is identical with what you told him, declare that your demand is withdrawn.»

I issued a clear-cut order for the delegation to leave immediately for the Homeland. The Allied Mediterranean Command did not dare take any further action. Faced with our determination, it was obliged to find a *modus vivendi:* the delegation would be permitted to leave (**1**), but Palmer would come, too, to discuss the questions directly with me. They sent the delegation by sea, while the British officer dropped in by parachute the same day that the delegation reached our Staff.

Palmer came and talked with us. His opinions were more moderate than those Elliot ex-

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1 Bari sent a very urgent radiogram to Caserta and Foreign Office on August 29, 1944, which among other things said: «4...it was agreed it would be expedient not to insist on our decision while L.N.C. delegates here, firstly because Hoxha might use this step on our part as an excuse for action against own personnel in Albania...» *(FO 371/43552-3277, PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

pressed to our delegation in Bari. He told me that McLean and Amery woud be summoned to Bari to report on the question that had been raised. However, the British did not withdraw McLean's mission from Bazi i Canës. McLean and Amery, who played the role of the *eminence grise** remained with Bazi i Canës until they were nearly captured by our partisans.

At the beginning of the autumn of 1944, the partisan forces in the North were scoring one success after another. We were preparing to attack Tirana. The Red Army was driving into the Balkans, closing the Germans' roads back to their lair. Now they were in their final decline, and having lost all hope, were trying only to save their necks. In these conditions reaction, urged by the British, thought that it should play the old game which it had tried one year earlier, when fascist Italy capitulated, that is, the farce of going out to the mountains, and it had been advised to do this by the British officers attached to Abaz Kupi. Even the heads of the Balli Kombëtar, the quisling regents and other reactionaries could see that the German horse was at its last gasp and they were doing everything possible to place themselves under the wing of the Anglo-Americans.

According to the information that reached

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* French in the original.

us, at the meeting which they had with McLean at the Mazha village of the Kruja district, he had laid down certain conditions. First of all, they must put aside their quarrels with one another and create a common bloc against the National Liberation Front, they must «go out to the mountains» in order to gain credit among the people so that the British could justify the aid they would give them. According to them, this would open the prospect of the creation of a «national government», which would fight against the Germans! The first steps in this farce were taken. Immediately after the meeting, Fiqri Dine resigned Preng Previzi placed himself under the command of Abaz Kupi, who was to be the commander of the joint forces. They even laid out the «plan» of going to the mountains. A so-called government was formed in the «mountain» of Preza, and they shared out the «posts»: head of government — Mithat Frashëri, foreign minister — Mehdi Frashëri, minister of justice — Thoma Orollogai and so on. Jani Dilo and other «fathers of the nation» were appointed to various posts. In this tilting at windmills all their hopes were pinned on the «staff» with Abaz Kupi as the commander-in-chief.

The British understood that the «bold spirits» who made up this pack of rabbits would not achieve anything, but nevertheless decided to make use of them, because even they might

serve their plans. It was not without a purpose that they chose the Kruja-Durrës-Ishëm zone in which to concentrate the «army» of the joint bloc. It was not without purpose that they ordered Abaz Kupi and his horde to liberate Durrës and Cape Rodon. By «liberating» this zone from the Germans, who were withdrawing, the British wanted to prepare the terrain for a landing from the sea. It was not for nothing that the «government» was established in Preza, which is close to Tirana, and in any eventuality, it would be poised to make a «triumphal» entry to the capital.

In the North, the British officer Simcox was preparing an alternative move with Gani Kryeziu, the feudal lord of Kosova. If the «national government» of Preza failed, it would be Gani Kryeziu who would form the «national government» in which Muharrem Bajraktari, Gjon Markagjoni and other refuse would take part; in the opposite case, this would be done by reaching agreement with Abaz Kupi and Mithat Frashëri. As the feudal lord of Kosova had been disarmed and handed over to the Yugoslavs, their only remaining hopes were pinned on Abaz Kupi. It must not be left unmentioned, either, that the proposal of the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters to drop «specialized troops» by parachute on the outskirts of Tirana, in Peza and Darsia, was part of this co-ordinated plan.

However, neither the British, nor the reactionaries whom they had taken under their protection, were able to outwit our Party. It watched all these actions closely and took energetic measures. I informed all the regional committees, and especially Comrade Gogo Nushi in Tirana, and the Command of the 1st Army Corps about these enemy manoeuvres. I told them that a situation similar to that at the time of the capitulation of Italy was being created. The traitors were firing a few shots to give the Anglo-Americans an excuse to support them. I instructed them to distribute leaflets saying that Mithat Frashëri, Abaz Kupi, Mehdi Frashëri, Ali Këlcyra, Fiqri Dine, Lef Nosi, and their other collaborators were traitors and would be put on trial as such. I instructed that leaflets should be issued appealing to those who had been deceived and misled to surrender and join the ranks of the National Liberation Army. I issued a special order to the Staff of the Army Corps to attack reaction without mercy.

The general offensive began. In early September, the 1st Brigade attacked Kruja, routed the German garrison and the reactionary bands, burnt Abaz Kupi's house, and together with a battalion of the 3rd Brigade marched on Preza to attack the «staff» of reaction and to prevent it from escaping from the rat-holes in which it was cowering. At the end of August the 4th Bri-

gade moved into Mirdita, burnt the manor-house of Gjon Markagjoni, advanced into Lura, and cleared this region of reactionaries. After settling accounts with Muharrem Bajraktari in Luma, the 5th Brigade marched towards the Highlands of Gjakova. The other brigades in various zones of the country acted similarly.

The furious attack by our army on the Germans and reactionaries also caused confusion among the political circles in London that were interested in Albania. Now the British had no alternative but to enter into direct contact with the German Command so that its troops would surrender to them. The Intelligence Service charged the British Major Neel, based in Shkodra, with this task. We had suspected that they were up to something of this sort, but it was the testimony of the German officer Helmuth Mauth, whom we captured, that made the whole game clear to us. According to him, through an agent of the Gestapo, Neel had made contact with the command of the German 21st Army Corps and had proposed on behalf of the British government that the German troops should not withdraw until the British forces had landed, that a joint staff of the two armies should be created, and thus they should fight together against the partisans. He had proposed to the German Command in Albania that after the National Liberation Army was defeated, all the possibilities

would be provided for the German troops to return to their country. The German General Fitztum, who considered these promises were based on doomed hopes and moreover put no trust in the «magnanimity» of the «British Lion», had sent the British officer the stiff-necked reply that he took orders only from his command and carried out only its orders.

The British officers made such demands several times, but the Anglo-German link-up and collaboration was stopped in its tracks by the partisan rifle, which did not allow the Anglo-Americans time to land at Cape Rodon or the Germans to continue their resistance. Thus, the National Liberation Army blew up these plans of the British, too.

Our Party smashed to smithereens the plans of the imperialists who aimed to enslave Albania. The plans of the «fathers of the nation» also ended up in the rubbish bin. Albion put these people in a few boats and took them abroad to save their necks from the anger of the people, who emerged triumphant over the Italian and German occupiers, over the Zogites, Ballists, and quislings, and over the agents of the British Intelligence Service and the American OSS, in order to use them later as spies, saboteurs and assassins against Albania.

In his second venture in Albania, as chief of the British mission attached to Abaz Kupi

and other traitors, whom the British could not allow to fall in the hands of our forces (**1**), McLean suffered another ignominious defeat. One dark October night, a torpedo boat picked him up somewhere on the coast and took him to Italy, never to return. His departure and the flight of the chiefs of reaction left the flock of Legaliteti and the Balli Kombëtar in complete disarray. Some surrendered, others fled, while still others lay low in the forests and mountains, as instructed by their «shepherds», to await further orders. This last group was to comprise the contingent of bands which committed crimes against the new people's power after Liberation until they were crushed by the iron fist of the people and the Defence Division.

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1. A radiogram from Bari on October 28, 1944 sent to the Secretary of State at Caserta says:

«Abas Kupi has asked to be evacuated from Albania with his 2 sons and 3 personal followers.

2...I submit the strongest recommendation that his request be granted.

3. He has been of considerable service to the Allied cause since June 1940, has had a British Mission with him from August 1943, and his name has come to be closely associated with England... that I do not believe that he could be abandoned to his fate without considerable loss to British prestige.» *(Telegram N° 372, FO 371/43566-3517. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

VI

THREE ATTEMPTS AT LANDING — THREE FAILURES

A new head of the British mission with a «more sympathetic» appearance. Aid: «Much ado about nothing.» Palmer's first «success». Ultimatum: Either supplies of weapons or clear out! Radiogram from the fighting front: the Kryeziu brothers, the British officer Simcox and Fundo — prisoners of the partisans. An Anglo-Titoite «coincidence». Proposal for concrete aid: «Let us drop commandos at Peza, Ishëm and Darsia to liberate Tirana!» «No, Mr. Palmer, never!» Second attempt: at Spile. The third failure: at Saranda.

Our war against the German occupiers and the local reactionaries who collaborated with them was raging fiercely and had assumed wide proportions. At this time, the spring of 1944, generally speaking, the operational initiative had

passed in the hands of our National Liberation Army.(**1**)It had emerged from the fierce fighting and countless privations of the winter 1943-1944 toughened and better prepared for stern battles against the occupiers and their tools in Albania. On the order of the General Staff it had launched the general offensive which is known as the «Spring Offensive». Besides the battalions and çetas, shock brigades — powerful commands, had been formed and their operations against the enemy were always crowned with victory. In all the liberated zones national liberation councils, which operated vigorously, as organs of the people's state power, had been formed. In the occupied zones, too, and even in the cities, underground national liberation councils had been created as fighting organs which united all the anti-fascist popular forces and assisted the National Liberation War.

The quisling governments fell one after the other like autumn leaves. The place of people

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1 In the weekly report dated March 8, 1944, on the situation in Albania it was reported to the Foreign Office:
«9. The partisan revival is a tribute to the flexibility and resilience of the L.N.C. brigades, the majority of which were reported a month ago to be either dispersed by GERMAN drives or faced with immediate starvation. The strength of the Partisans seems to lie in their discipline, energy and clarity of aim, qualities singularly lacking in their nationalist opponents.» *(FO 371/43550-3372. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

who had compromised themselves with the Italians was taken by those who had worked under cover, the chiefs of the Balli Kombëtar and other reactionary trends, who took part in the Regency, the government and other top quisling organs set up by the occupiers, and hence became open quislings.

Hitlerite Germany knew that it had lost the war. It had to protect the forces which it had in Albania from our ceaseless attacks. Likewise, it had to withdraw the forces it had in Greece, and hence to keep open the roads for their withdrawal, which were under attack by our brigades and divisions. For this reason the Germans launched partial and general offensives against us, spreading terror and devastating whole regions. The occupiers had the support of the Albanian reaction: the Ballists, the Zogites, the bajraktars, the quislings — formerly pro-Italian, now pro-German, with whom they had reached agreement to join forces and wipe out the communists and the National Liberation Army. Reaction assisted its ally — Germany, the nazi army, and at the same time tried to prepare for the «future», that is, to seize power when the German forces departed.

While waging unrelenting war on the enemy we kept vigilant watch on the manoeuvres of the quislings, the Balli Kombëtar and the Zogites; we replied to their actions with arms, with armed

counter-attacks, and defeated their plans through intensive propaganda among the people, in opposition to the German propaganda which loudly proclaimed that Germany had always been and always would be a friend of the Albanian people, that the German army was only here in transit and that all of its actions were undertaken to strengthen the freedom and independence of Albania! This demagogy was accompanied with allegedly «Albanian» measures — with the «National Assembly», with the organization of the «Albanian gendarmerie», because the «Albanian fascist militia was not Albanian», etc., etc.

The British had suffered defeats in their intrigues. Seeing that their plans were being consistently discovered and foiled, they thought they could improve the situation by dropping us a few more weapons. But we did not fall for their trickery. I advised the commissars and the commanders: «You must cherish no illusion, no hopes, and no belief that the British are going to drop us weapons. We must have faith in ourselves, in the Party, in the people and in our National Liberation War. We must attack the enemy, smash it and capture arms, ammunition, clothing and food. This is the only way that we will ensure stores of arms. We expect nothing from heaven. We will continue to demand weapons from the British as our allies, but all they drop us count for nothing in our great war.»

In meetings I explained to the commissars: «While the British and the Americans are our allies in this war, because they are fighting the Germans, we must never think that they sincerely support our war. They do not want to arm us, because they know that by doing so they are digging the grave for their real friends. They want us to fold our arms, to stop fighting and be weak, so that they can thoroughly enslave us tomorrow.» Therefore I issued the call for fighting, relentless fighting, correct policy, revolutionary diplomacy and vigilance, vigilance!

Two or three months after General Davies was taken prisoner, Britain sought permission to send another representative to our General Staff, a Major Palmer, who was promoted a little later to Lt.-Colonel. I authorized this and in April 1944 he was dropped by parachute in the region of Korça, if I'm not mistaken. He was accompanied by his chief of staff, a radio operator and some other officer.

As we saw later from the attitude Palmer adopted, he had been instructed to present a «more sympathetic» appearance, that is, to avoid appearing as cunning and arrogant as McLean, or allegedly the plain soldier like the General, who proved to be not at all the soldier he claimed to be up till the moment he surrendered to the Germans.

Palmer was all smiles when he met me. He

was a man about 40, fit-looking, with clear-cut features, and intelligent smiling eyes. After we exchanged greetings, he told me that he had come to replace General Davies at the Supreme Staff of the Partisan Army and to contribute his maximum to the strengthening of the friendship between our two countries and armies which were allies against the same enemy, Hitlerite Germany, and other such high-flown but worthless words. I replied in general terms, too. I also asked him if the British intended to assist us with weapons and clothing, which was a very important issue for us, but which, I told Palmer, «you forgot to mention.» I also gave him a short account of the small amount of aid which they had given us.

«Your Shakespeare,» I told him, «wrote a comedy called *Much Ado About Nothing.* However, this performance that is going on today to the detriment of a people thirsting for freedom goes beyond the bounds of comedy or drama and is a terrible tragedy. A small people, like ours, are fighting and sacrificing everything for victory in this war. The only aid we ask from you is in weapons, nothing else, while all you do is talk about it and in fact we see very very little, almost nothing of this aid.»

Palmer laughed, although he had been smiling the whole time. It seemed they had deliberately selected this cheerful type in order to avoid any further worsening of relations with us.

«With our landing in Italy, I believe we'll adjust this matter better. You must understand our difficulties,» Palmer tried to explain.

In his attitude, conduct and way of speaking, he was much more mature, cautious, serious, and sympathetic than all the other British officers I met during the war. He posed as if he sympathized with our war, although certainly he approved neither of our war, nor of our political stand. However there was nothing he could do about them and he did not display this openly like McLean, nor tell flagrant lies like General Davies.

On many occasions I had arguments with Palmer, and even spoke angrily to him about the stand of other British missions, the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters and General Wilson, but Palmer always maintained his typical English aplomb, took notes, thought carefully before he spoke and replied to me tactfully and diplomatically.

Naturally the question of weapons was always a source of discord between us. In fact, we had never pinned any hopes on getting arms from them and did not really expect that they would drop them to us, but we insisted on this question in order to bring out the sabotage and other activities which they tried to carry out against us.

The contradictions that we had with the

British over the inadequate supply of arms became very acute. At long last Palmer came to me with a proposal of the Mediterranean Headquarters on this problem. As he put it, in order to solve the problem of arms supplies from the allies properly and quickly, the Mediterranean Headquarters proposed that we should send a military delegation to Bari and present our requirements there. The comrades and I examined and discussed this proposal at length.

I sent for Palmer and told him of our decision. He rejoiced at having achieved this «success» and said with satisfaction, «Now I believe that everything will be settled.» I was convinced that nothing would be done. And in fact, it turned out just as we had foreseen. As I wrote in the previous chapter, our delegation came back with nothing but promises and empty hands.

Palmer often felt himself hard-pressed and could hardly wait for the occasion when half a dozen rifles were dropped in some region so that he could come to me all smiles to bring the good news.

The Germans were receiving mortal blows on the Soviet front, which was the main front of the war and sealed the total defeat of Hitlerite Germany. The Red Army had advanced into the Balkans and was driving towards the West. The Anglo-Americans had landed in Italy. The German forces found themselves in difficulties in

the Apennine Peninsula, while the allies advanced very slowly. Kesselring's armies were making a fighting retreat and apparently wanted to turn the Alps into an impassable defence line. It had become virtually impossible for the forces of the German army deployed in Greece to remain there any longer. The only possible routes for their withdrawal were through Macedonia and Albania to link up in Montenegro, Bosnia, Sandjak, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia to reach Austria where they would unite with Kesselring's forces withdrawing towards the Alps.

Making a thorough analysis of the general war situation, and foreseeing the situations that would be created, our General Staff set the National Liberation Army the important task of stepping up its military attacks on the German-Ballist forces. It also set the task that our shock brigades must be further toughened and better armed, that bigger military units, divisions and eventually army corps, must be created, because we anticipated fierce battles with the German nazis, who, fighting desperately during their retreat, would launch savage offensives to weaken us and wipe us out, in order to keep the routes open for their withdrawal.

At the same time, the Party foresaw that the day of victory was not far off, therefore preliminary preparations had to be made for the liberation of the Homeland which was costing

us so much blood, tears and sacrifice. The national liberation councils had to be strengthened everywhere. It had also become imperative to hold a major congress at which important political, organizational and military decisions, in connection with the internal situation and foreign policy, would be taken. The congress had to determine the legal form of the people's state power, to set up the new state of people's democracy and consolidate its leadership. Any attempt outside the country to form some so-called Albanian government in exile, etc. had to be blocked legally through the unanimous decision of a great assembly (the first people's assembly) elected democratically.

We put these and other current problems before the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party which met in the middle of May in Helmës of Skrapar and which took the respective decisions and laid down the guidelines for the future. These guidelines had to do with continuing the National Liberation War against the enemy occupier and traitors more fiercely in order to drive ahead on all fronts till their complete defeat, till the liberation of the whole of Albania and the setting up and consolidation of the state, administrative and legislative political power, that is, the establishment of the state power of people's democracy throughout the whole country. These things were also put forward and dis-

cussed in the Congress of Përmet and were embodied in the decisions which it took.

These were major tasks. Of course, we knew and the Party had made clear to all the partisans and the people that the road was not strewn with rose petals, that even more blood would be shed, and we would have to overcome many difficulties and make still more sacrifices. We would achieve all these things by fighting and the victory would come from the barrel of the gun and the correct, principled, Marxist-Leninist policy of the Party.

We were locked in a life-and-death struggle with the Hitlerite army and reaction, the two main enemies, whom we had to totally defeat and liquidate together, once and for all. As I explained earlier, the reactionaries, the quislings, the Ballists, the Zogites, the bajraktars and the pseudo-democrats were fighting us with arms together with the Germans, with the aim that when we had driven the latter out of the country, reaction would be organized and able to seize state power. These were moments when our National Liberation Army had become very strong. Reaction could see clearly that we were putting an end to the occupying forces and could feel the ground slipping from under its feet. We were not only driving the enemy out of our Homeland, but following it in hot pursuit, carrying the fight beyond our state borders.

The more the nazis suffered defeat and the

stronger the National Liberation War grew in our country and other countries, the more dangerous Anglo-American imperialism became. This was a ferocious enemy. It was disguised with democratic slogans and called itself «anti-fascist», but in fact it was perfidious, operated powerfully, always in disguise, and sought to turn the situation to its advantage to establish its hegemony over the peoples of the world. There were many who forgot this, who underestimated it, while the Communist Party of Albania and its leadership never slackened their vigilance towards it. We were wide awake at every moment to foil its plans and we did foil them, one after the other. The British stepped up their pressure on us, while we struck back at them harder.

They had heard of the preparations which the Party was making to organize the Congress of Përmet and were striving feverishly to hinder it, therefore they sent their senior officer, Lt-Col. Leake, as their emissary, to meet their agent, Mustafa Gjinishi, and give him directives to sabotage the Congress. (I have written about this episode of the secret war of the British against us in that part of the memoirs in which I speak about Mustafa Gjinishi, hence I shall not dwell on it here.)

The pressure, blackmail and brutal interference of the Anglo-Americans against our

National Liberation Movement became more intense in the summer and especially the autumn of 1944. There were reasons for this. The decisions of the Congress of Përmet, especially those prohibiting Zog's return to Albania, on the non-recognition of any other government within the country or in exile, the cancelling of all agreements concluded with them by Zog to the detriment of the interests of our people, etc. hurt them badly. But what made the Anglo-Americans most furious was, on the one hand, the gratitude the delegates expressed to the Soviet Union and the Red Army of Stalin, which had torn the Hitlerite army to pieces and was advancing triumphantly towards Germany, and on the other hand, the public condemnation of the efforts of the Anglo-American allies to poke their noses into the internal affairs of our country.

The great momentum of our war. the general offensive of our National Liberation Army and the successful development of this offensive in the North alarmed the leading circles in London and Washington. While things were going the way they wanted with Tito's Yugoslavia and with Greece, through Santos and other agents of theirs in the Greek Communist Party, nothing was going right for them with little Albania, which they had considered a push-over. It was slipping from their grip. Faced with this fact, they were obliged to sit down and work out even more sophisticated plans.

Meanwhile in the North, the partisan forces were launching furious attacks on the occupiers and reactionaries. Our brigades had clashed with the German and Ballist troops in the regions of Dibra and Kukës. The command of the 1st Shock Division informed us that their ammunition was running out. More than ten days had passed since the date when Palmer had promised me that armaments would be delivered.

I summoned the head of the British mission to come to the centre of our Staff at night. Quietly, but in cold and clear terms I told him:

«Mr. Palmer, two weeks or so ago I presented to you a request for weapons, ammunition and mortar shells. You are well aware why we need these materials urgently, because I also told you the purpose of them. I also told you where we intended to operate so that, as we agreed, the weapons would be dropped at the place and on the date we set together. You welcomed my request with a smile and told me that you would immediately inform the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters and General Wilson about this. Four days later you came and told me that the request had been accepted and that the weapons would be dropped by parachute at the time and the place set. On the basis of your promise we took immediate measures, gave orders for our forces to go into action and they are involved in fighting at present. You are not keeping your

word and you are causing our National Liberation Army great damage. If you do not take immediate measures to drop us the promised arms, we shall consider this a hostile gesture which is damaging and causing losses to an allied army. If the weapons are not sent immediately, not only shall we make you responsible for this before world anti-fascist opinion, but we shall take severe measures against all the British missions on our side.»

Palmer frowned, which was something rare for him, but with his English imperturbability, quickly assumed a smile and said in self-defence, as if to calm me:

«Mr. Hoxha, you are displaying hot temper...»

I could tolerate no more and cut him short:

«What do you expect, should I laugh, should I not be indignant, not be hot-tempered when my comrades are being killed in the fighting?»

«I understand the difficult situation, both for your forces and for us, but I believe, and I am sure of this, that our Mediterranean Headquarters does not lack the will to assist you, but it must be the weather conditions which are hindering us. Nevertheless, Mr. Hoxha, it is my duty to report once again what you have told me. and for my part I shall insist that the munitions are sent,» said Palmer.

This was an ultimatum which I gave the

head of the British mission. I would avoid meeting him until he came to inform me whether or not the arms had been sent and that is what I did. We had decided that if they did not drop us the weapons, we would expel the British mission from our Staff. Such a thing was not in their interest and they were afraid we might do this, because they had begun to understand the way we thought. No more than three or four days went by when I was informed that Palmer had sought a meeting. From the comrades I had received the news that the arms had been dropped (after we had smashed the German and Ballist forces). The Lt.-Colonel came and, smiling as usual, told me:

«Mr. Hoxha, the desire of both of us has been fulfilled, the arms have been dropped.»

«The comrades told me,» I said. «Thank you, in particular, for your efforts. You who are here know the situation better than those who are in Italy,» I added. This pleased Palmer greatly and after he had drunk the tea and eaten the fruit which I offered him, he went off rejoicing.

The Anglo-American imperialists were still holding two or three cards to be used at the appropriate moment. At this time the card which seemed to them to have the most chance was that of Gani Kryeziu, the feudal lord of Kosova, who, it was whispered, was preparing to form a «gov-

ernment», at least for Northern Albania. We very quickly made this card worthless.

We were in Odriçan of Përmet. The main forces of our army were engaged in successful actions in Central and Northern Albania. On September 20, 1944, I received an urgent radiogram in which Comrade Manush Myftiu reported that the forces of the 5th Brigade had surrounded Gani Kryeziu's çeta, had captured Seit Kryeziu, Llazar Fundo, alias Zai Fundo, and the British officer attached to them, Simcox, and were holding them under arrest, awaiting our instructions as to what to do with them. One day later, Gani Kryeziu was also captured.

Of course this was good news for us. At last these enemies of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War, the Communist Party of Albania and international communism, would render account. As I read the radiogram I could see in my mind's eye, as on a cinema screen, all the evil deeds and hostile activity of these individuals during their lives, and I recalled everything that I had seen and heard about them.

Zai Fundo was the son of a merchant from Korça, from a family which posed as «gentry». As a young democrat he had been a member of the progressive association *Bashkimi* and at the beginning of the 20's had taken part in the anti-feudal movement.

Zai was caught up in the wave of political

activity and it seemed as if he had taken a different road from that of his family, as if «he had taken the side of democracy against the feudal lords.»

When Zog returned to Tirana with the aid of foreign powers, the main supporters of the Fan Noli government emigrated abroad. Zai Fundo went, too. Eventually he ended up in the Soviet Union with a group of Albanians, amongst whom were Ali Kelmendi, Koço Tashko and others.

Some years later we heard from Ali Kelmendi that Zai Fundo had betrayed communism, hence had become a renegade — a dangerous and very cunning Trotskyite, but had escaped the purge of the Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and other renegades, because when his Trotskyite activity and views were discovered, he was not in the Soviet Union. Now he was to be found sometimes in Switzerland, sometimes in France, or elsewhere, working furiously and openly against communism, against Stalin and against the Soviet Union, as a leading figure in the ranks of the Trotskyite 4th International, and had placed himself in the service of who knows which of the imperialist states which were organizing the sabotage and the fight against the Soviet Union. Therefore, we were not surprised when he was found in the service of the British. On the eve of the fascist occupation he returned to Albania with the permission of

the Zog government, after having given assurances that he would not engage in politics. Zai Fundo did not come without ulterior motives. He was not an economic emigrant nor any ordinary political emigrant, but «renowned» as an anti-Zogite and anti-feudal and especially as a «communist».

The resistance of our people against the despotic regime of Zog was building up, the communist groups were extending their ranks and activity, fascist Italy had got our Homeland into its clutches and was preparing for its occupation. The situation in Europe was disturbed. The tramp of the jackboots and the clash of the bayonets of German nazism and Italian fascism were becoming loud and ominous. The wars of plunder had begun.

Precisely in these troubled times, like a wolf seeking cover in the fog, Zai Fundo returned to Albania, undoubtedly sent by foreign agencies to prepare the terrain for the enemy, to sabotage the creation of the Communist Party of Albania and the armed resistance of the Albanian people.

We understood the danger of this renegade, hence we took the necessary measures to fight him to the finish. I undertook to unmask him among the teachers, professors and students and at the same time to discover his manoeuvres and methods of work, where he would create his bases and how he would extend his network. The

other comrades undertook the task to make clear to workers and the peasant element who this traitor was. Right from the start we watched the activity of this notorious individual among the merchant bourgeoisie and liberal and «democratic» intelligentsia of Korça. It would be difficult for him to penetrate amongst the workers of Korça because they had long known what he was, whereas if he were to attempt to establish links with the countryside, he would do this through the «liberal» beys and aghas. This is how we began the work against him, with the old guard of the Communist Group of Korça in the forefront.

Zai Fundo set to work systematically. He made contact with all those about whom the prefect and his agents had not the slightest trace of doubt, hence he was legalizing his activity according to the «promises» made before his return to Albania.

He established links with the leaders of the merchant bourgeoisie of Korça who were linked with the Moslem beys and aghas, who were more in contact with the countryside and among the most trusted supporters of Zog and his henchmen. He linked up, also, with those who formed the opinion of the «Moslem elite» of Korça, who became his closest friends. Certain intellectuals of Korça, especially the pro-fascist ones, also became supporters of Zai Fundo. We discovered

these things very quickly because we kept his meetings out in the town and his frequent visits to individual families under careful surveillance.

It was difficult for us to learn what he talked about with these people, but sometimes we heard of it through their boasting. Zai preened himself as an «able politician», as a «man of great culture». He told them that «he was for reforms, but in a moderate way because it was not time yet for far-reaching reforms», that «the country was backward from the aspect of education», etc., etc., but he never went deeply into what should be done. He spoke «fine words about the youth», avoided talking directly about the Soviet Union and Stalin and said: «I am a communist, as the whole world, including the prefect, knows, and there is no way I can hide this.»(!)

We met from time to time, reported on his activity and, after discussion, took decisions to expose him further as an enemy of the workers, as an enemy of the genuine land reform which would be the salvation of the peasantry, etc. Naturally, Zai and his friends did not like this struggle which the Bolsheviks, as they called us, waged against him. Koço Tashko, who posed as «the head» of our group, did not like it either. He. too, tried to force us not to struggle against Zai Fundo. because he allegedly had «anti-fascist sentiments»! However, we carried on with our work.

Zai Fundo expressed «his anti-fascist sentiments» to me one time when he stopped me in the street in Korça. There I seized the opportunity and poured out everything I had against him. What did I not call him! Every epithet that fitted him: Trotskyite, enemy of socialism and Stalin, enemy of the Albanian people, etc. From that day on I never set eyes on him again.

Soon after the Italian occupation he disappeared from sight. Nothing was heard about where he was, what he was doing, whether he was legal or illegal. Could he have been allocated some secret mission by the occupier, or some «nationalist» or Trotskyite group? We had to find out.

Finally the news reached us that Zai Fundo was «underground» in Kosova where he had linked up with the chiefs of reaction in Kosova, the brothers of Ceno Bey Kryeziu from Gjakova, Gani and Seit Kryeziu. They had formed a çeta and, according to our information, there was a British mission with them. This mission was not subordinate to the British missions located in other zones of Albania, or if it was subordinate to them, this they kept very secret.

As is known, during the Italian occupation the territories of Kosova came under the domination of the Italians and, for purposes of demagogy, «Greater Albania», or «Ethnic Albania» was created in this way. It was clear to us that

fascism was not thinking of the benefit of Albania and the Albanians, but of its own interests. This was an incitement to Albanian reaction to serve their Italian fascist patrons better and to draw greater economic gains, and in fact, the Albanian quislings, in collaboration with the fascist reaction in Kosova, organized the systematic plunder of Kosova under the direction of the Italians. However, through the slogan, «in the end Kosova has been united with Albania», the Italian fascists, like the German nazis later, reckoned to deceive the Albanian people and the Albanians of Kosova by telling them that their dreams had been realized and that only Italian fascism had brought this about, therefore «they should not fight against Italy, but against the communists». We and the people of Kosova with the exception of some chiefs whose hearts were not bleeding for Albania, fought this demagogy of fascism. The Albanian people were never taken in by this vile and very dangerous demagogy. Our Party and the National Liberation Front adopted clear and correct stands on this problem. The people understood us and followed us, while reaction and its chiefs fought us to the end.

The Kryeziu family of Kosova came within this latter category, that is, among the chiefs of reaction. The Kryezius were notorious in Kosova as reactionary feudal lords, oppressors and exploiters

of the peasants and opponents of the powerful liberation movements of the people of Kosova against the Turks and the Great-Serbs. The Kryezius, Dragas and others were always not just in opposition, not just in secret struggle, but in open struggle against the revolutionary efforts and struggles of Isa Boletini, Bajram Curri, Hasan Prishtina, Azem and Shote Galica, and others for the liberation of Albania.

Ceno Bey Kryeziu, the oldest of the brothers and chief of the clan, was a friend and agent of the Great-Serbs, of the King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes who ruled in Kosova, too, a friend and agent of Pasic, at that time the Yugoslav prime minister. He served his Serbian patrons well to the detriment of Albania. He was one of the main assistants and intermediaries of Ahmet Zog, who was another agent of the Serbs at that time. Zog, driven from Albania by the revolution of June 1924, did not waste his time in Yugoslavia. With the approval and direct assistance of Pasic and King Alexander, he returned to Albania together with Ceno Bey. In return for this, Zog gave the Serbs the Albanian territories of Vermosh and Shën Naum, as I said earlier, while he gave Ceno Bey Kryeziu one of his sisters as his wife.

Thus, with the return of Ahmet Zog, Ceno Bey, the agent of the Serbs, also entered Albania and Zog's family as an honoured son-in-law

to keep an eye on the political moves of his «outstanding» brother-in-law and to keep him under the control of the Serbs. However, there were no bounds to the perfidy of the future carnival king. He was changing the trough he fed from. Compared with the «brilliant» perspectives, which the talks with fascist Italy offered him, Serbia no longer served his purposes. Indeed, it became an obstacle, as did the agent of the Serbs, Ceno Bey, the «beloved» brother-in-law who went in and out of Zog's palace with such self-assurance. Therefore, one morning in Prague, Ceno Bey was assassinated by unknown persons. Zog was very «grieved» and his «court» went into mourning! However no one was taken in by this farce, least of all the Serbs and the Kryezius. After the murder, Ceno's place was taken by Gani Bey, another agent of the Serbs, an anti-Albanian feudal lord, ready to serve every *Kralj** or whoever would pay him most.

In the time of the German occupation, one fine day Gani Bey Kryeziu, posing as a patriot, «took to the mountains with his çeta against the occupiers», who were only imaginary occupiers, «in principle», to him, because in fact his çeta never fired a shot against them. However, what astonished us was that the BBC and the

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* Serbian for king.

newspaper *Mundimi*(**1**)of Bari had a great deal to say about the imaginary «fighting» of this «çeta» and its commander. He had two «commissars» with him: the British officer Simcox, an agent of the Intelligence Service, and the Trotskyite of the 4th International, Zai Fundo. Thus, Gani, Zai and Simcox comprised a trio of the Intelligence Service. There was also Gani's brother, Seit, who posed as a social-democrat and was bound hand and foot to the British agency. When things seemed to be going badly for them in Kosova, Gani Kryeziu's çeta crossed into the districts of Tropoja and Kukës.

The task of Gani, Zai and the British was to fight against the partisans, to sabotage our Anti-fascist National Liberation War and establish and strengthen connections with Muharrem Bajraktari, Cen Elezi, Fiqri Dine and other reactionary chiefs in Northern Albania. Together with them they prepared the terrain for the future, so that, with the defeat of Germany, they would take power. Of course, they pinned their hopes on Britain, because they nurtured the belief that it would intervene in the Balkans with its army and, since the partisan forces would be «exhausted» from fighting the Germans, they «would be easily liquidated». According to

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1 Published by the Anglo-Americans in the Albanian language. It engaged in propaganda by distorting the facts in their interest. It was dropped into Albania from the air.

them, history would repeat itself. They would also create a «government» and, in the end, the feudal lords would rule our country and people again. «Therefore,» they thought, «we must hold back, conserve our strength, must not involve ourselves in fighting and be fresh and vigorous when the day comes to take power.» This was the idea and plan of reaction and the British. However, their reckoning was astray. Our Party foiled their plans.

Gani Kryeziu's çeta could not operate freely, undetected by our forces, which were continually pursuing and attacking the Germans and the chiefs of internal reaction.

We discovered that Gani and Zai with a small çeta and with the British officer attached to them, equipped with a radio transmitter, were trying to create a movement against our Party and the Anti-fascist National Liberation War, by means of the reactionaries of Kosova and the bajraktars of Northern Albania. We gave our forces orders to track them down, pursue them, capture them and defeat their activity before it had really got going. Gani Kryeziu operated underground, hidden from us and, when he was hard-pressed by our partisans, crossed over to Kosova where he had his bases. We were unable to move freely in Kosova on account of the intrigues of the Yugoslavs and of Vukmanovic-Tempo, in particular, and were obliged to watch

for when the Kryeziu's çeta returned within our borders. Therefore, we had issued special top secret orders to our forces to follow their movements carefully and to capture them as soon as they entered Albanian territory.

The order had been carried out and the traitors were captured. Zai Fundo, Seit Kryeziu and the British Major Simcox were captured in the Dobrej Mountain, while Gani Bey at the Bytyçi Flat, where the tents brought from England for the «war headquarters» had been put up. I learned the history of his capture later, but this is not the place to describe it.

Meanwhile, Colonel Velimir Stojnić, accompanied by a major called Nijaz Dizdarević, and one or two others of lower rank, had come to our country. They came to the CC of our Party and the General Staff as delegates of Tito, the CC of CPY and the Yugoslav General Staff, as a «liaison group» in order to «give us their experience and exchange experience with us» on the war and the party.

At that time we considered them friends, because they posed as communists and had still not been exposed and come out as renegades from Marxism-Leninism. Nevertheless, in their activities, we noticed certain indications that they were not in order. Indeed, we had had contradictions with them over matters of principle, but it had never crossed our minds that they

had gone so far and fallen so low as to collaborate with the British behind the scenes to our detriment.

We had our first meeting with them in Helmës. They informed us about the situation in Yugoslavia and we likewise spoke about the situation in our country. The impressions, which I and Miladin Popović, whom we called Ali, formed at the first meeting and after a series of talks with them, were not particulary favourable.

«It seems to me that they did not tell us much,» I said to Ali, «everything they told us we know and have put into practice.»

«Not only that,» replied Miladin, «but the authoritative air, arrogance and conceit of Velo (Stojnić) did not please me one bit. He pretends to know everything and seems as if he wants to say that he has to feed us on the bottle. But we don't swallow that, therefore they have to treat us as comrades.»

«It seems to me that the other one (meaning Nijaz Dizdarević) is cleverer and more cunning,» I told Ali.

«You are not mistaken,» he said, «but we shall see.»

«Keep your head,» I advised Miladin, because you will have the opportunity to talk with them all the time, therefore, when you feel that you are hard-pressed, break off the conversation and say that 'Enver must decide and not we'.»

This was the agreement we reached with Miladin Popović, that genuine communist and beloved Yugoslav comrade, who nurtured an ardent and pure love for our Party and people. However, there is a long history to our relations with Velimir Stojnić. For the moment I shall deal only with what occurred between us in connection with the question of Gani and Seit Kryeziu, Zai Fundo and the British officer.

As soon as we received the radiogram which the comrades sent us about their capture, we met, discussed the question and took our decision. The facts were flagrant for all to see. We sent a radiogram to the comrades in the North in which we instructed them to try Zai and the Kryezius before a military court which they should set up. They were to disarm their çeta and, after doing political work with the members of it, they were to send them home, while Major Simcox they were to hand over to some British mission in our territory. Ali went to the house where Velimir Stojnić was staying to inform him about what had occurred and our decision.

I waited for hours on end for Ali to come back for lunch and when he finally arrived, he was fuming with anger.

«What's wrong with you?» I asked him.

«What's wrong with me!» he said. «They are rotters! They don't agree with the decision and said if it is not rescinded, they will break

off relations with us, pack their bags and return to Yugoslavia.»

«How is it possible for them to do such a thing over a renegade and these traitor feudal lords?» I asked him.

«It's possible all right,» said Miladin, «I couldn't come to agreement with them in any way and left telling them: 'This is a problem that is up to the Albanians, come and talk with Enver and convince him.' So they are going to come and talk with you.»

«All right,» I said.

Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević came at the appointed time. Miladin and I were there. We greeted them, shook hands, and offered them cigarettes. Velo smoked but Dizdarević did not. We were calm and they tried to appear calm.

I opened the conversation by saying that Ali had informed me about their views in connection with the prisoners captured in the North.

«This astonished me,» I told them, «because the interests of our two parties and our common war require that these enemies should get the severe punishment they deserve.»

I remember as if it were today that Velimir Stoinić. who had a pale face and looked even paler from the powder he used, flushed with anger and rose to his feet with his eyes looking savage and said to me:

«We Yugoslavs, the representatives of Tito

and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, do not permit them to be shot.»

«You astonish me greatly,» I said, «that you defend these enemies. Excuse me, but perhaps you do not really know who they are. We shall hand them over to the military court and leave it to the court to decide. Such people deserve a bullet,» and I began to speak about their biography. Velimir Stojnić interrupted me saying:

«There is no need for you to tell us about them, because we know who they are, and if you give the order for them to be put on trial and shot, we shall break off relations with you and leave for Yugoslavia.»

«You are making a big mistake in putting our fraternal and communist relations in the balance against our stand towards these enemies, who are feudal lords who have sucked the blood of the people of Kosova, and a renegade from the Communist International, a Trotskyite, an enemy of the Soviet Union and Stalin, an enemy of our people and our Party,» I told Velimir Stojnić.

«I'm not discussing who they are,» said Velimir Stojnić, «but hand them over to us because they are Kosovars, hence this is an issue of principle. We have our party, our front, our laws and our courts. They must be handed over to us and we shall do what we think fit with them. Otherwise, we shall leave.»

«We are not breaking off relations with the peoples of Yugoslavia who are fighting against the nazis,» I said, «but you are wrong when you say that they are Kosovars. Only Gani and Seit Kryeziu are from Kosova and since you are apparently so fond of these notorious beys of Kosova, take them, let them be yours, while Zai Fundo, who is not a Yugoslav citizen, nor resident in Yugoslavia, nor of Yugoslav origin, but is from Korça, does not belong to you, according to your own thesis,» I told Velimir Stojnić.

«They are together,» said Velimir Stojnić, «and have their centre in Kosova.»

«But you see, we captured them operating against our Party and our Front in Albanian territory! According to your thesis,» I replied, «if we capture the quisling Xhafer Deva, since he is a Kosovar, we should hand him over to you to be tried for the crimes he has committed in Albania! Such reasoning won't hold water. However,» I continued speaking to Velimir Stojnić, «I do not think that the CP of Yugoslavia and Tito (at that time we had no suspicions about him, on the contrary) will think as you do, but since you weigh our fraternal relations against the stand which should be adopted towards traitors and feudal lords, we shall hand them over to you and I shall give the order for this immediately. Zai Fundo, the enemy of the Communist Party of Albania and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia

will be tried and if the partisan court sentences him to death, he will be shot immediately.»

Velimir Stojnić left the house of old Mehmet, where I had put up, having saved the feudal lords Gani and Seit Kryeziu, agents of the Serbian chauvinists and the British and enemies of our war, from death.

After him Palmer (**1**) came to me. Apparently, the delegates of Tito and the British Empire had come to agreement with each other. Palmer, too, although in more moderate terms, asked me to release the Kryezius, Fundo and Simcox. In order to persuade me he added:

«Release them, General, and we shall assist you with arms.»

«As for your 'aid',» I replied, «we have long been aware that it is nothing but words. You personally have informed me several times •on end that the British aircraft are to drop war

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1 The headquarters of the SOE in Bari, Italy, on October 8, 1944, sent its mission Consensus II in Albania the following message:

«...Lazar Fundo was captured with Simcox and Said... He may therefore be in grave danger and strongly recommend you should do utmost secure his liberation and evacuation to Italy. Convinced Fundo sincerely pro-British and believe that his intimate knowledge of Balkans and Central EUROPE and Communist Party organization might make him most valuable to I.S.L.D. *(Signals from SOE Headquarters in Bari, Italy, to Mission Consensus II, May-Oct. 1944, No. 60, pp. 122-123.)*

materials at Staravecka and elsewhere. In fact, the aircraft have flown over our country, not to bring us aid, however, but for other purposes. We see them cross our borders from Korça en route to Greece.»

«Yes, but they have run into resistance and have been forced to change course,» he said in justification.

«I understand clearly why they have changed course,» I said, «but nevertheless, we are fed up with such tales. You were speaking about those that we have captured in the North. On the question of the two prisoners from Kosova, I have given the Yugoslav representative my reply. As for Zai Fundo, what we shall do with him is our business, while as to your officer, I have issued the order to hand him over to you. I believe the matter is now clear to you. That is all I have to say,» I said and stood up to let him know I had no further time to waste with him.

I was astonished over this «coincidence». We did not know that Tito had long been linked with Churchill. We knew that Churchill's son had been attached to Tito and also knew about Tito's links with Subašić, as well as about his visit to Italy and that he had held talks with British personalities, but we did not know what he had cooked up and was cooking up with the British.

Thus, this question ended in disgrace for

the Yugoslavs and the British. I issued the order for the comrades to hand over Gani and Seit to the Yugoslav partisan forces, and this was done, while they were to put Zai Fundo on trial and punish him severely, and this was done.

This was only one aspect of all that hostile work which the Yugoslavs were to carry on against our Party, against the People's Republic of Albania and against socialism in Albania, both on the eve of the liberation of our country and later. This same Velimir Stojnić and his associate, Nijaz Dizdarević, who had been entrusted by Tito with carrying out their hostile activity, were to carry it further at Berat, but that is another long story which will be dealt with in a separate book.

However, let us return briefly to the question of the Kryezius, because there was a sequel to it.

When we went to Berat to hold the important meeting of the 2nd Plenum of the CC of the Party, at a time when Velimir Stojnić and Nijaz Dizdarević, together with Nako Spiru, Koçi Xoxe, Sejfulla Malëshova, Pandi Kristo and others, in a conspiracy behind the scenes, were preparing the attack on the correct line of the Party, Velimir Stojnić came to me in my office, together with Seit Kryeziu.

Velimir introduced him to me.

«I knew Seit Kryeziu when I was a student

in Paris,» I said. «I don't know whether he remembers me.»

«Yes,» replied Seit, «I remember you.»

Then Velimir Stojnić told me:

«Seit has come here on the recommendation of Tito who asks you to assist him to get to Bari in Italy, because he has been entrusted with the task of securing weapons for Kosova from the allies (obviously from the British).» The thing was clear. Gani Kryeziu and the British were wasting no time. They left one Kryeziu with Tito and were taking the other abroad, perhaps to London.

«How is he going to travel, what help do you want from us?» I asked. «We have no connection with Bari.»

«Everything has been arranged by the General Staff of the Yugoslav army and the Allied Mediterranean Headquarters,» Stojnić replied.

«Very well,» I told Tito's representative, «since this business has apparently been arranged, there is nothing for it but we must help him reach the Coast.»

This whole business became clearer later, when it came out what a dangerous enemy and active agency of imperialism Yugoslav Titoism was. However, we had sensed and detected their savage hostility towards us long before this

through their actions, which went from bad to worse.

There were many who were not aware of the fierce struggle which we were waging against the British, against their secret war and underhand plans against us, therefore great determination and keen vigilance were required and there must be no hesitation on the part of our Party in its actions. Our Party carried out its difficult but glorious mission with honour and success and overcame the numerous dangers with which it was confronted. Following the «ultimatum» which General Wilson sent me and the reply that I gave him, we were awaiting their reaction, therefore we were wide awake, ready to take counter-measures.

It was not long before the British made a move. They began to exert other pressures, even more dangerous, to the independence of our country. As everyone knows, the Western allies had promised that they would open the second front in Europe in 1942. However, they did not do this in 1942 nor in 1943, but only in June 1944, when Hitlerite Germany was on its last legs. Under the pretext of opening this front, they wanted to land in Albania, too. To this end they began their attempts to land an army.

Our Party understood that their attempts to land an army were not for the purpose of fighting the Germans in Albania, because this was being

done successfully by the Albanian National Liberation Army, which was completely capable of liberating its own country without the aid of the armed forces of the «friends», but for the purpose of getting Albania into their clutches. Our Party did not permit this, and as I shall describe below, refused and rejected their repeated proposals to land «allied» troops in our country where, when and in the numbers and with the means they wanted. This was a terrible danger which threatened our country.

Our clear decision was that we must resist this danger resolutely, even if this meant becoming involved in armed clashes with our «sincere» allies. Our Party could not permit a repetition of April 7, 1939, or the massacre of martyred Borova. «No foreign army, whether allied or not, will be permitted to do what it likes in our country,» was our decision. Now the people, with their Party at the head and their own National Liberation Army, were the masters of the country. The situation was changing day by day. The German nazis were living their last moments. Our armed forces were attacking them everywhere. Reaction did not know where to go for shelter. Every night Tirana was under attack by our forces and the only escape route for the Germans was through Shkodra. It was also the escape route for the reactionaries, but a very dangerous route for them.

The first attempt. As I have pointed out, the British suffered a defeat with the reply of our General Staff to the pressures they exerted and in the ultimatum which they sent us about not attacking their friends in Albania. Next they thought they would bring troops to the vicinity of Tirana on the eve if its liberation. By this means the British, together with the reactionaries, aimed to impose themselves on us in order to realize their major purpose. If this proved impossible, at least they might be able to take the traitor chiefs Lumo Skëndo, Abaz Kupi and others, together with their forces, to some of our ports from which they could be withdrawn to Italy and elsewhere.

To this end, Palmer came to me at our base in Odriçan and, with his usual smile, began to tell me that the «Huns» (the British frequently called the Germans this) were on their last legs, that the allied front was extending and so on and so forth. I waited for him to get round to the main point, because I realized that all this was leading up to something, therefore I simply listened and said nothing. At last he got around to his theme:

«Mr. Hoxha,» he said, «up till now there has been good collaboration between us. Of course, we've had some disagreements, but such things occur even between friends, nevertheless, we are allies for a great cause and our two sides have

been fighting for years on the same front against the same enemy. Both we and you have fought hard and have assisted each other in this war. We have tried to assist you with our weapons and ammunition, although of course this aid has been insufficient. Our Headquarters thinks,» he continued «that from now on it should give you greater assistance and proposes, apart from aid with weapons, to send you aid with *tommies,* whom, with your permission, we could drop as commando forces in the region of Peza, Ishëm and Darsia. In this way, our two allied armies will join together like brothers to attack this plague and put an end to it more quickly. With this aid which we propose, what we have in mind is to assist you and your friends and ours, the Yugoslavs, because in this way fewer Germans will pass through their territory.»

Palmer had come to the end of his speech. His face was set in that perpetual smile of which I was heartily sick and which seemed to imply to say: «Look what wonderful tidings I'm bringing you?!»

I lit a cigarette as I thought: Acceptance of his proposal would lead to the initial form of a British invasion. Nevertheless, I had to reply to him in the same coin: smile for smile.

«Thank you very much,» I said smiling at him, «I thank your Headquarters and you for bringing me this proposal of concrete aid, even

with *tommies* whom you want to drop by parachute around Tirana. It is true that we have been and are allies in a great common cause. It is likewise true that Britain is fighting, and I agree with you on this, but the Albanian people are fighting, too, and they began the war against the Axis powers before Great Britain, indeed they began it and are continuing it alone. When Italy invaded us Britain turned a deaf ear. We fought on barefooted, ragged and hungry, but unyielding. The enemy has destroyed villages, towns and whole regions, has killed many people, but we, too, have wreaked havoc on the enemy. We fought the Italians tooth and nail and brought them to their knees. We are doing the same thing with the nazis, too. You and our other allies have fought on other fronts, too. We know this. **But here,**» and I raised my voice, **«on our soil, only the Albanian people have fought and only they will fight till the end.** You did not believe us when we told you that the people were with the National Liberation Front, that they were and are with us because we are their true sons. But you see what is occurring now? The whole people have risen to their feet. In the course of battles, we built up a powerful, invincible army, and now that we are beginning to call the tune, you propose to bring an army into our territory! It is a bit late in the day for this. No, Mr. Palmer, we do not accept your proposal,

because there is no reason for you to drop troops here. You can see with your own eyes what proportions our war has assumed, that we have long since gone beyond the phase of isolated actions and are now on the offensive against the nazis and their collaborators on all fronts. Is this not so?»

«It is so but...»

He wanted to say something, but I continued and did not let him speak.

«We have ample forces in Peza, Darsia, Ishëm and everywhere else and we have no need for aid in men, in commandos, therefore we do not allow you to drop them. The missions you have here are sufficient. We have never concealed from you any information about our fighting or anything in connection with the enemy. Therefore, please transmit my thanks to your Headquarters and our categorical refusal of the proposal you made to us.»

Palmer left without another word.

I immediately notified Peza that if they discovered paratroops being dropped, they should open fire on them and wipe them out. This diabolical plan of the British was linked with the proposal which Mustafa Gjinishi had made to me earlier, that he should be allowed to form brigades in Peqin, Darsia and elsewhere outside the orders and command of Myslim Peza. I rejected this proposal. The pieces of the puzzle

were falling into place. These forces of Gjinishi would have collaborated with the British para-troops.

The second attempt. Some time later, Palmer came back again with the proposal to make a small symbolic landing with a commando force, this time on the Coast, at Spile of Himara.

«Why do you want to make this landing?» I asked him.

«For two reasons,» he said. «To show our collaboration with you and to wipe out the German garrison at Spile of Himara, which has no military importance but observes the movements of our ships.»

«I know that the garrison is unimportant,» I told Palmer, «however, I shall give you my reply in two or three days' time, when I have more detailed information on the situation.»

I discussed the matter with the comrades and we decided that this time we would give the British a satisfaction which entailed no danger for us. I ordered our forces on the Coast to take up positions at Pilur, Nivica-Bubar, Llogara and to go to the aid of the British troops if they ran into any danger during their attack on the German garrison.

I sent for Palmer and informed him that we accepted his proposal. I also warned him that the German garrison must be the only objective

of the operation and, after it was wiped out, the British forces must re-embark in their boats and go away. They would not be permitted to linger and settle in here. This was a categorical order.

«Let us carry out this action jointly,» I proposed to Palmer.

«Thank you,» he said, «but we shall do it ourselves.»

«Nevertheless,» I told him, «our men will take up surrounding positions and will guard the roads to ensure that none of the nazis escapes from the trap and we wipe them out like rats. We shall be there to protect your landing and your withdrawal after the action,» I added to let him know that he must take our orders very seriously, because we were not joking.

The action was carried out. The Germans captured 9 British prisoners and were on the point of completely liquidating the British commando. However, our 12th Brigade intervened, routed the German garrison, liberated Himara and freed the prisoners. What remained of the British commando climbed back into their boats and withdrew to the place they started from.

It was only later, with their next attempt, with the operation to land British commandos at Kakome, Saranda, that we were to understand why the British undertook this action,

which was of no interest to them and without any strategic importance.

The third attempt. The same old refrain this time, too. Palmer came, launched into his introduction and then made the proposal. I asked him:

«What is the interest that impels you to propose such a thing? The small German force in Saranda is doomed to be wiped out, its only escape route is by sea, and we plan to throw them into the sea very soon, thus liberating the whole of the South.»

«Precisely,» said Palmer. «Therefore, you should agree to carry out this action jointly, because in this way we block the road for the defeated German forces which might enter from Greece.»

This attempt, too, was to end like that in Spile.

As soon as we took the decision in the General Staff, we informed comrades Kahreman Ylli and Gafur Çuçi, giving them clear orders on how to enter into discussion with the British, what to say to them and how to act. We instructed them that in the talks, they must present our army as it was, a regular army. «Do not allow the British to make any advance outside these orders,» was the instruction we gave them.

After this, I sent for Palmer.

«We agree that we should attack the German garrison in Saranda together,» I told him,

«but we shall attack from the land and you from the sea, and once the action is over, your forces must withdraw immediately.»

He nodded his head. He seemed dissatisfied, but nevertheless considered it a «success» that we had agreed that this action should be carried out jointly.

And that is what was done. Partisan forces of the 14th, 12th and 19th Brigades of our army launched a furious assault on the enemy. After three days of fierce fighting, they wiped out the Germans and Saranda was liberated. More than 150 Germans were taken prisoner, including the colonel who commanded them. The British commandos, whose «fighting» amounted merely to firing some salvos of artillery at the Lëkurës fortress and the Butrint Monastery, also entered the liberated town as «victors». Nevertheless, since most of the British landed from the sea, they had many casualties, while we had few.

However, after the operation was completed, our command in Saranda reported to me that the command of the British troops had asked for the German colonel to be handed over to them to be sent to Italy, alleging that in this way «more publicity would be given to the fight for the liberation of Saranda»; our command also reported that the British soldiers were behaving badly, breaking shop windows, stealing the goods and taking them to their ships and that there

was a danger of armed clashes between the British and the partisans. The British command had wanted to continue the «attack» inland to Delvina and Gjirokastra so that the British soldiers could parade as «liberators» before the people there! However, our comrades had told them that these towns had been liberated and now the British must leave. After this the British command had proposed to the partisan command that they should make a joint attack on Corfu.

These were very serious and dangerous matters. We notified our command to order the partisans to keep their tempers and protect the town, to consolidate their positions at Qafa e Gjashtës, Butrint and Bogaza, to keep the artillery on the hills above Saranda and at the Butrint monastery in readiness, to be vigilant and keep movement on the sea under close observation and to inform us immediately if other British ships appeared and, if they moved towards the shore, to await orders from us and to fire artillery shots to warn them off. I ordered them to send the German colonel under escort to Berat.

On the other hand, I summoned Palmer urgently and made an energetic protest about the requests of the British command, as well as about the unpleasant behaviour of the British soldiers. I told him that the joint task had been carried out, Saranda had been liberated and, in

the terms of the decision, the British forces must be withdrawn as quickly as possible.

Palmer pretended to be indignant about the bad behaviour of the British soldiers and told me that he would report that the forces must be withdrawn immediately.

We waited for the British to withdraw, but nothing was being done. They postponed their departure from day to day. Apparently, their aim was to remain there and have Saranda as their base on the Coast and in the territory of Albania. (**1**) Mussolini also had liked this pearl of our country so much that he had named it «Porto Edda», after his own daughter. But the times had changed. The pearl had an owner.

Several times I sent for Palmer to protest to him and he assured me that he would notify his centre to order the withdrawal. In the end, the cup was full. Our patience was at an end. I issued him an ultimatum, instructing him to transmit it immediately to the Allied Mediter-

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1 Immediately after the landing of the British commandos in the Saranda zone, on September 29, 1944, Bari reported to the Foreign Office amongst other things:

«2. Subsequent development of the operation depends upon a number of factors which cannot at present be assessed. But it is possible that if everything goes well we may be able to maintain a permanent footing on Albanian soil as well as in Corfu.» *(Telegram No 722. FO 371/43572-3584. PRO: From the photocopy of the original in the A1H, Tirana.)*

ranean Headquarters. «If the British commandos are not withdrawn from Saranda by the given date, then war will break out between the partisans and the British,» I informed him.

I instructed our forces there to be in readiness, awaiting an order to attack the British with arms and to let them know that we had taken all measures and were determined to throw them into the sea. At this they began to panic.

Palmer arrived and proposed to me:

«Our forces are ready to withdraw, but we ask your permission to withdraw, not by sea, but through Delvina, Muzina, Dropull and Pogon.»

The diabolical plan of the British was obvious. They wanted to show themselves off as liberators, to create disturbances among the minority people, to link up with the forces of Zerva, to roam at will through our free zones, etc.

«In no way will we permit your brigade to go by this route,» I told him. «It must go back where it came from, immediately, by sea. It is my duty to inform you: make no attempt to go past our fortified places otherwise you will be attacked. If this occurs, you must bear the responsibility. We are determined to defend ourselves and to defend the sovereignty of our country. We have considered you friends and we want you to continue to be friends. Therefore, you must carry out immediately the decision which we took jointly.»

Eventually the British climbed into their boats and... we were rid of them. Just at this time, in October, they landed in Greece, where the situation was similar to that in our country — the eve of liberation. They entered that country freely, under the agreement signed at Caserta, which was the death warrant for the victory of the Greek CP, the EAM and the freedom of the Greek people.

Because of the vigilance and determination of our glorious Party, all the plans to land troops in our country failed one after the other.

Although they failed in these attempts, the British did not give up their efforts to intervene in our country. After the formation of the Democratic Government of Albania on October 22, 1944, we stayed in Berat for a brief period. The Allied missions were there, too. The houses where the Anglo-American missions were quartered had been turned into hornets' nests. All sorts of people went in and out their doors. Secret information was given and received. New plans were concocted.

«The British officer came to see me,» Comrade Spiro Moisiu informed me.

«What did he say? Did he have any news about the recognition of our Government?» I asked. It was several days since we had handed the foreign missions our request to their govern-

merits for recognition of our Democratic Government.(**1**)But this had fallen on deaf ears.

«No,» replied General Moisiu, «he did not touch on that problem, but told me that we should repair the airfield at Kuçova, because they are going to order aircraft to bring aid for the people!»

«What did you say to him?» I asked.

«We can't repair it at the moment,» I told him, «because we have other more urgent problems. 'We shall help you,' the Englishman said, and the matter was left for me to discuss with you.»

«I agree,» I said, «but we must take a good look at what their aim is. As for what he told you about bringing us 'aid', we know very well how much they worry about the interests of our people. It's more likely they're worried about our oil. Apparently they think they will give us a few pounds and consider that they have bought the oil-field.»

This danger existed. At one time Kuçova had been held as a concession by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which had sold it to the Italian company AIPA, with rights to exploit it for 99 years. Now that Italy had been reduced

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1 The letter which the British ambassador to Moscow Archibald Clark Kerr sent to Molotov on October 30, 1944, says: «Dear Mr. Molotov,

1. I have been instructed by my government to inform the Soviet Government that in the present confused situation in

to such a feeble condition, they might think that the time had come to take it back, this time for nothing.

Comrade Spiro came back again, very angry, and told me:

«It turned out just as you said, Comrade Enver. The British officer met me and said without a blush: 'Here is our aid, 40 pounds. Inform us when you finish repairing the field so that the aircraft can come!'»

«Don't distress yourself, Comrade Spiro,» I said, «we know exactly what they are and we are sick and tired of their 'aid'.»

«I told the Englishman: 'This isn't enough to feed the people who will work there for two days, so put it back in your pocket,'» continued Spiro. «We shall repair the airfield when we need it and when it suits us.'»

With this parting shot, he bid the British «philanthropist» goodbye.

We still did not know that Lt.-Col. Palmer, through Tarasconi, the manager of AIPA in Kuçova, had got control of the oil. This act, too, would be discovered and dealt with later.

Albania they do not propose to recognise the «Provisional Government» set up there by the F.N.C. party.

2. My government hope that the Soviet Government will concur in this course.

3. A similar communication is being addressed to the Government of the United States.» *(FO 371/43564-3530, No. 2179: PRO. Taken from photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

The British also sought the assistance of the United States of America as an ally to achieve their predatory aims.

We had information that an American military mission was staying with Skënder Muço, a leader of the Balli Kombëtar, in Dukat of Vlora. Skënder Muço posed as a «patriot» and it was rumoured that he was going to create a «social-democratic party» which never came to anything. He was a two-faced individual. He had placed himself in the service of both the Anglo-Americans and the Germans. The latter became aware of this and killed him.

About the end of April or the beginning of May 1944, I don't remember clearly, Thomas Stefani, with two others, presented himself to our Staff at Helmës. He was about 30 years of age, a short, thick-set man. Sometimes he spoke English, sometimes Albanian. But he spoke neither of them well and with an accent as though he had a mouthful of porridge. He had plenty to say but not with much sense.

«I've been sent to the Albanian partisans by Air Force Headquarters as liaison officer,» this American lieutenant told us at the first meeting we had with him.

«When were you sent?» we asked him.

«It's wartime, gentlemen,» he said. «We set out some time ago, but we were obliged to spend

several months, first at Karaburun of Dukat and later as guests of Mr. Muço, but he...».

«We knew he was bound to come to a bad end,» we told him. «Several times we appealed to him to join the National Liberation Movement but he didn't want to and... he was shot like a stray dog...»

«We three are of Albanian origin,» Thomas Stefani hastened to say, to get off the subject of Skënder Muço, «we are from Korça.»

«That is good to hear. As Albanians we shall get on well,» I said.

«First, I am an American, then an Albanian, gentlemen. Such is my duty.»

«But what is your duty?» I asked.

«As liaison officer, I shall ensure communications between you and my Headquarters and will report from time to time as the need arises. I have special instructions from General Stawell to gather intelligence information on the enemy, especially number-plates and other information which will help support the actions of your military forces against the occupier.»

This was the «duty» of this degenerate Albanian, who so foolishly boasted to us that he was «first an American». However, we knew that he had been sent to throw dust in the eyes of the Albanian families of economic emigrants in America in order to say to them: «You see, we too.

have come to help the Albanian people.» He had come to prepare the ground and the premises for the notorious Mr. Fultz, who was to organize plots and blackmail against our people's state power from the first months of the liberation of Albania.

He was an ex-policeman whom the Americans later promoted to captain and became the guide of the «pupils» and «boys» of Fultz, who had opened an office of the American OSS for Albania in Bari in Italy.

The British and Americans thought that everything would go smoothly for them and they acted. However, the Party countered their plans, fought them blow for blow and foiled them one after the another. The Party worked to ensure that everything would go completely in favour of the Albanian people and of the freedom, independence and sovereignty of our beloved Homeland.

With the liberation of Albania, the missions of Palmer and Thomas Stefani disappeared, along with the heads of reaction. Their place was taken by the missions of the British General Hodgson and the Americans Jacobs and Fultz, Anglo-American missions which had as their objective to organize the political opposition, economic interference through UNRRA and sabotage of the reconstruction of our country.

VII

UNSUCCESSFUL MANOEUVRES

November 29, 1944. Victory — the whole country celebrates. Revolutionary measures. Missions for the «recognition» of our Democratic Government! Fultz: the «pupils» and the «boys.» «Philanthropic» instruments — «ML» and UNRRA. «We accept no conditions. We allow not even one officer to set foot on the wharf.» The «Opposition» — unfortunate actors in a drama that was a flap. Nobody can impose conditions on Albania. Paris: «Let the whole world know that the Albanian people do not permit any discussion of their borders...» The saboteurs on trial. «Why did Mr. Fultz leave?» The Corfu Channel incident. At the Hague — the innocent guilty. Why was the gold frozen? — Plunder. The «crabs» in action. Life is struggle — vigilance!

On November 28, 1944, the Democratic Government of Albania entered liberated Tirana which had been turned into a heap of ruins. The smell of powder smoke still lingered. The Gov-

ernment was welcomed with indescribable enthusiasm, with songs, dances and flowers, by the masses of the capital city. It was the first government to emerge from the bosom of the people, from the barrel of the partisan rifle.

Shkodra, the main centre of Teuta of the Illyrians in ancient times, was liberated on the following day, November 29. This day marked the complete liberation of Albania. The flag of Skanderbeg and Ismail Qemali waved proudly over the whole of Albania. This was the greatest victory in the history of the Albanian people. It was dedicated to their unrivalled heroism, to the resolute and far-sighted leadership of the Communist Party of Albania, to the sons of this people who pressed forward through storms and tempests and were never conquered, but remained indomitable, facing the gallows and bullets on the battlefield, facing the intrigues, underhand plots and diabolical plans of the imperialists, and would always remain indomitable in the future, too.

The Albanian people's war inflicted great material and human damage on the nazi-fascist occupiers. On our territory 26,594 enemies were killed, 20,800 were captured, and tens of thousands of others were wounded. The victory cost Albania very dear. For this day 28,000 of its sons and daughters sacrificed their lives in the flower of their youth, that is, one martyr for

every square kilometre; 12,600 people were wounded, while 10,000 others were interned in concentration camps.

Whole regions, towns and villages were devastated. The serious damage caused by the war added to the difficulties of the economy, which had been left completely backward and at the mercy of fate under the feudal regime of King Zog. Agriculture was almost totally ruined. Whole tracts of land had been left unplanted. Enormous damage had been done to livestock farming. All the bridges had been blown up. The roads, the few existing schools, the power stations, and water supply systems, the ports, and especially the mines, had been made unusable. The country was threatened with famine. Trade had been paralyzed, the treasury was empty.

This was the situation the Albanian people and the Democratic government which emerged from five years of unequal war, inherited from the past reactionary regimes and the nazi-fascist occupation.

The Party, the people and the Government faced major tasks. A new fight, just as difficult, if not more so, awaited us — the struggle for the reconstruction of the country, to heal the wounds which the enemy and the black past had inflicted on us.

We were conscious that we were going to triumph in this fight, too, and we would

achieve this, first of all, by strengthening the Party and the people's state power, by steeling the unity of all the working masses around the Party and the government. The victory over the occupiers and the traitors had been achieved because blood was shed, and now it would be defended and secured once again with bloodshed and torrents of sweat.

The strengthening of the Democratic Front was also on the agenda of the Party. It would be a revolutionary organization which in the construction of the new Albania, just as yesterday in the war, would play a decisive role in the militant unity of the masses to carry out new historic tasks. Under the leadership of the Party it would become the main support of the new state in defeating the attempts of enemies to create «democratic parties» as opposition parties in order to split the unity of the people and seize state power from their hands.

We set to work for the reconstruction of our Homeland. Everything had to be started from scratch, from the smallest thing up to industry, which we did not have in the true sense of the word. We had to set it up ourselves. We made the reconstruction a problem of all the masses, especially of the youth, who placed themselves at the head of actions. An unprecedented enthusiasm burst out everywhere. The revolution-

ary tide was mounting day by day. We were scoring successes in every sector.

As a result the grave wounds were healed relatively quickly. The ruined houses were rebuilt, work began in the mines, the power stations, the few factories we inherited, the educational and cultural institutions. Agriculture began its normal life.

But a new economic base, an advanced economy, was required to respond to the political regime which was new in form and content. Without such a base it would be a castle built on sand.

The government solved the economic-financial problem with revolutionary measures which had to do not only with the revival of the country but also with the weakening of the economic positions of the mercantile capitalist bourgeoisie. As a result of the law on the special tax on war profits, a good part of the big capital which the capitalists had seized during the war was placed in the service of the people and the reconstruction of the country. With this measure the Party struck a heavy blow at the big merchants, the usurers and the speculators. Along with this it carried out the nationalization of the main means of production, the mines, The Bank, the assets of political fugitives and foreign capitalist companies. The economic dependence on the imperialist powers was ended and the political inde-

pendence of Albania was strengthened. The Land Reform was made a reality under the slogan of the Party, «The land to those who till it!»

Later the socio-economic transformations were to assume even greater proportions.

In the course of the struggle and work to march ahead the Party and the Albanian people were bound to and did run up against internal reaction which, in the new conditions, had placed all its hopes on the support of the Anglo-Americans, who had long been waging an undercover struggle against us through their agents and the elements whom they recruited. The Anglo-Americans themselves had not given up their plans, either. What they had been unable to achieve during the National Liberation War they tried to achieve after the Liberation by fighting us in the most varied ways and with different means in the international arena and within the country, in order to deny our new state of people's democracy any support and to overthrow it.

With the liberation of Albania by the people themselves and their army, we thought that the British and American officers, who had been deployed during the period of the war in different regions of our country, had come to the end of their «mission». During the war their aim had been quite apparent: they had come not to assist our war but for espionage against it, to sabotage it, to

organize and strengthen internal Albanian reaction and to help it seize power after the nazis left. But the war buried their dreams. Nevertheless, they did not cease concocting other plans to realize their old aims. Our victories were to make them even more furious and their struggle against us was becoming more open and fierce.

In February-March 1945, the British mission was enlarged and General Hodgson came to head it. A little later the Americans, for their part, sent a civilian mission, headed by Jacobs, with the old American agent in Albania, Harry Fultz, as his assistant.

General Hodgson had his eye on the house in which Zog's uncle had lived, a building near the present-day *Qemal Stafa* stadium. We gave it to him. He came to pay us a visit at Hotel Dajti because we still had no offices. I went with Dr. Omer Nishani to pay him a return visit at his «residence».

«I trust that the day will not be far off when the embassy of Great Britain will be established in this house, General,» I said to him.

«It is the custom of our government not to be hasty in these matters, Mr. Hoxha,» said Hodgson. «Let us wait until a constituent assembly, elected in the most democratic manner, determines the form of the regime of the new Albanian state.»

«This will be done very soon,» I said. «The

Congress of Përmet decided this: 'A new people's democratic Albania will be built according to the will of the people.' As youknow,» I continued, «the foundations of the new political power were laid there in favour of the insurgent people; the people themselves decided their own future. The Democratic Government which emerged from the Meeting of Berat and which is the authentic expression of the aspirations of the people, has the question of the elections to the Constituent Assembly as a fundamental task of its publicly proclaimed program and I assure you that our elections will be most democratic. The voting will be free, direct and by secret ballot, on the basis of the electoral law. The Constituent Assembly, expressing the will and aspirations of the people, will decide the form of the state.»

«But in your country, General Hoxha, there is only one party — only your Communist Party!» said Hodgson.

«It is true that there is only one party in our country, the Communist Party of Albania. It is very strong and its program expresses the desires and aspirations of our people who are a people thirsting for freedom,» I replied. «It was created in the heat of the most ferocious war which mankind, and our people, in particular, have ever seen. The Communist Party of Albania heroically defended the interests of its own people, who are with it and have great love for this

Party. They followed it on the most difficult road and the main thing is that they saw with their own eyes that this Party was in the forefront of the great National Liberation War and gave fearless leadership, and that is why they formed their unshakeable faith in it. Why did the people not follow the Ballists, Zogites and other reactionaries, but recognized the Communist Party as their sole leadership?» I asked him.

«Because you did not allow them, Mr, Hoxha,» said the General, speaking in a tone of disapproval and fixing me with a baleful gaze as he awaited my reply.

«That is your opinion, General, but it is without foundation,» I told him. «Assume for a minute that we accept your idea, then I ask you: Why did the Italians, the Germans, the Ballists, the Zogites and others, who committed all those crimes against our people, not stop them from coming with us? The answer is very simple: the people hated them for the vile deeds they perpetrated against them and fought them heroically and with self-sacrifice. They united all their physical and spiritual forces around the Communist Party of Albania, told it to lead them and it did lead them, led them to victory, and now, General, the people are in power and the Communist Party — the defender of their interests with unwavering loyalty, is in the leadership.»

«The people have their own opinions which they want to express, Mr. Hoxha,» continued the General.

«No one knows better than the communists that the people have their own opinions,» I replied, «Indeed, you are quite unable to conceive the strength of our people's opinions. If we had not listened to their opinions and their voice they would not have loved us and would not love us now, they would not have followed us and would not be following us step by step, as they are doing. Communists are always guided by a great principle which they apply: it is not enough simply to listen to the opinions and the desires of the people, but you must realize them in practice. We communists have done this and are continuing to do it.»

«But, Mr. Hoxha, you do not permit other political parties to be formed,» objected the General. «The people can express their will freely only if they have other parties.»

«It seems, Mr. Hodgson,» I told him with a smile, «that you cannot sleep at night because the 'unfortunate' Albanian people cannot speak because they do not have a number of parties. But have the officers of your missions reported to you how the rifle of our people sang and against whom it sang? Are you concerned that there should be other political parties for the people,

or for the beys, the feudal lords, the Zogites, the traitors and the speculators?».

«Oh, no, parties for the people and the democrats,» replied the General.

«The people themselves are in power, they have their great organization, the Democratic Front, in which they freely express their opinions. Through this organization they are realizing everything their hearts desire, including the confiscation of the capital of wealthy merchants who have sucked their blood throughout their existence, the carrying out of the Land Reform and other major reforms as quickly as possible, as well as the punishment of traitors. The Trade Union Organization has been set up. The youth and women have their own organizations,» I told the General,

«But all these are run by the Communist Party,» said the General.

«Who do you think they ought to be run by, General, by Zog and Bazi i Canës?»

«No,» said the General frowning, because I was treading on his corns. «I think, by some democratic party that might even be in opposition».

«Oh,» I said, «you are very concerned about a 'democratic' party. Your concern is unnecessary. Don't worry yourself so much, leave us Albanians to settle this matter ourselves. I tell you, General, we have no need for anyone from outside to help us.

«There are 'friends' in the world who make

the accusation against us that 'there is no democracy' in our country! If these 'friends', General, understand the term democracy as freedom for the collaborators with the occupiers, as freedom for the criminals, speculators and usurers, who fattened on the blood of the people in their darkest days, as freedom for the suppressors of the rights and freedoms of the common masses, let these gentlemen understand clearly that there is not and never will be such freedom in the new democratic Albania. Perhaps through the press you have followed the trials which the people's courts in our country have conducted against the remnants of fascism, the quislings and traitors recently. The people heard from the mouths of these criminals what vile deeds they had committed at the expense of the suffering people. The people's courts cleared away the brambles and thorn bushes so that the tree could flourish and grow up healthy. The iron fist of the people's democracy will always fall mercilessly on such elements.

«From the time of the war the people and their Government have appealed to misled individuals to change their course,» I continued. «Reasonable clemency has been shown towards them, but they must not abuse this clemency and they will be gravely mistaken if they take it for weakness. These individuals must honestly adopt the course of the people. This will save them.»

This was the essence of our talk with the British General on political questions.

He could not have expressed his opinions, which were not unknown to us, more openly. The important thing was that we must always be vigilant, because the British and the Americans would try to organize the remnants of reaction as a force to fight us, step by step, in our work of construction.

We would reply to manoeuvres with manoeuvres, without ever falling into opportunism or making any concession to the detriment of the interests of the people. To manoeuvre in the interests of the people means to strengthen their position and weaken that of the enemy. This was the angle from which we would view the line of our foreign policy. However, the primary thing was to strengthen the internal position of the country. We saw clearly that what the imperialists had been unable to achieve during the war, they would try to achieve now, after the war, with the remnants of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti which would represent internal reaction. Hence the strengthening of the internal position of the country was closely linked with the strengthening of the Front, the state and the economy, which would ensure the failure of all the enemies' efforts.

Immediately after Liberation, internal and

external reaction began a very wide range of manoeuvres.

Although the attempts of the British, in particular, to make landings in Albania under the cloak of aid had failed repeatedly during the war, they did not give up this aim even after Liberation. This time they tried to achieve it through an organization called «Military Liaison» (ML), which they had created some years earlier allegedly to assist the Balkan countries.

As was revealed later, they had provided ML with two possible variants for action in regard to Albania. The first envisaged that, totally disregarding our government and without asking its permission, it would disembark its military personnel in all our ports. Behind them, ready to give support, would be the navy. If the officers of ML encountered armed resistance from the Albanian forces they would fight and this would be a casus *belli,* a good excuse for intervention by the troops of the navy. In this way the occupation would be made a *fait accompli.*

However, seeing that the Democratic Government and the Albanian people were on the alert, the Anglo-Americans realized that this was impossible and were obliged to try the other variant, that of talks about «aid». They set two conditions for giving us this «aid»: 1,500-1,700 officers and specialists were to be brought in «to distribute it» and ML centres would be set up

in all our ports, from which their men would be allowed to «travel» everywhere. We could never accept such a thing. It would have been very dangerous. To accept 1,500-1,700 officers would mean to accept the «Trojan Horse», «a small army», inside the country and the big army would follow it. Therefore, our reply was a categorical «no». When they failed with the plan of ML they offered Albania the other side of the same medal — UNRRA.

To this end, Colonel Oakley-Hill arrived in Albania. This was the third time that this senior officer, whose heart «ached» for Albania, had come to our country. The first time, he came to organize King Zog's gendarmerie; the second time with a group of Albanian «patriots», via Yugoslavia, and attempted to organize the people «against fascism»; while here he was now for the third time in the role of the representative of UNRRA «to assist Albania in its rehabilitation»! As soon as he arrived in Tirana he sought a meeting with me to discuss the agreement with UNRRA. I left him waiting for a week or two because I had no time to see him. In the end I received him. He spoke at length about UNRRA, its purpose and its role!

«You ask that the agreement should be signed by me as General Commander of the National Liberation Army, or Prime Minister of the National Liberation Government,» I said.

«Apparently your chiefs are still using the wartime terms. I cannot imagine that they do not know that Albania has had a Democratic Government for almost one year now. Why is the request formulated in these terms?!» I asked.

«That will be just a *lapsus linguae* General. The main thing is acceptance of the personnel that we want to bring to Albania to distribute the material among the people,» he replied.

«We shall distribute the material ourselves, Mr. Hill,» I told him. «You may send people just to hand over the goods and that is all. It is our task to distribute it to the people according to their needs. This cannot be done otherwise.»

«Very well, I shall refer this to the centre,» said Hill.

«Finally there's the question of the personnel of the ML. They must be withdrawn immediately,» I added.

«I beg you to permit some of the ML to stay to assist UNRRA,» said Hill.

«In no way. All the ML personnel must be withdrawn,» I replied categorically.

«Very well, I shall refer this to the centre,» replied Hill.

It was not long before Jacobs came to me to talk «sweetly,» with the intention of getting as much as he could out of us.

He started by telling me the «reasons» for the coming of the mission and the delay in the recognition of the Democratic Government of Albania, which for me were simply *lieux communs,** a repetition of what I had heard from his colleague, Hodgson.

«The explanations which you have given me about your mission and the postponement of the recognition of our government seem to us unconvincing, Mr. Jacobs. Your formula that 'recognition must come after the situation in Albania becomes clear', is absurd. Recognition should result from the war we have waged against the nazi-fascists. However, that is your affair. The Albanian people are profoundly indignant and furious also about the injustice which was done them in denying their legitimate right to send their representatives to the San Francisco Conference.»

«Other countries, too, did not take part in that conference, Mr. Hoxha,» he said.

«But Albania has occupied an important place in the bloc of anti-fascist nations. This has been admitted even by the personalities of your country. Amongst those who attended there were some who not only did not contribute to this war but, on the contrary, collaborated with the Hitlerites directly or indirectly, while Albania

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* trite phrases.

remains outside the UNO to this day. It does not ask this from anybody as a favour. It is a right it has earned with bloodshed and superhuman sacrifices, by hurling itself unreservedly into the fight for its own freedom and the freedom of other peoples, for the rights of mankind. Nevertheless, the Albanian people, loyal to the end to the anti-fascist alliance, will continue to make their contribution to the just solution of problems which have to do with the future of the peoples.»

«I am of the same opinion as you, General,» said Jacobs diplomatically, «and I am convinced that this matter will be re-examined. But I also want to talk to you about the question of UNRRA. As you know, it has been created to assist the peoples who have fought.»

«I know this,» I said. «I have heard it from others, too.»

«Aha, 'ally',» I thought to myself, «I know what you have in mind.» However, he was right. As a servant of imperialism, he was bound to try to get this instrument of the Anglo-Americans established in Albania because they hoped by this means to put pressure on our government and to erode our people's power from within.

«However, I want to tell you that you cannot make yourself an exception from the other countries, Mr. Hoxha. UNRRA has its own regulations and they must be applied,» he continued. «Wherever UNRRA has sent aid, it has distributed

the goods itself in each centre, town and village. This is how it operates in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. However, I hear that you do not agree with this.»

Without doubt Hill had informed him about the talk he had had with me. The general view was that the influence of the Americans was becoming predominant over that of the British in UNRRA and already the contours of the tentacles of American imperialism were becoming more obvious. Uncle Sam was taking over the reins from John Bull, if he had not already done so, and the whip would crack even more heavily on the backs of the peoples.

«Mr. Jacobs, you are in Albania and Albania has its own laws. For your benefit, I shall repeat what you have apparently been informed about: If you truly want to bring us the aid of UNRRA, we are here. Send it to the port of Durrës and hand it over to the port authorities. Don't concern yourselves about where we shall distribute it. We are the government of the people and we strive on the people's behalf. We shall take the aid to its destination wherever the needs are greatest.»

«UNRRA is neither a British nor American organization, and this you know very well. It is an international organization,» he said with a beguiling smile. «Neither you nor I, nor any other party has the right to violate its rules.»

«Stuff and nonsense!» I said angrily. «Let us not beat about the bush: we do not permit all those officers to enter Albania. We agree that the goods should come and be handed over to our authorities in the presence of one or two officers of your mission in Tirana, and the representative of UNRRA will be given receipts for the goods which are delivered. That will be the end of its work and yours on this question.»

«Oh, no! That is not acceptable,» said Jacobs.

«Very well. In that case we do not want the aid of UNRRA,» I said. «We do not accept the conditions. We do not permit even one officer to set foot on the wharf.»

On previous occasions, during the war, «allies» and «friends» of this kind had come, smiled at us and snarled, brought us ultimatums and «good tidings» and left us only with talk about their so-called aid. McLean, Davies, Palmer, Thomas Stefani and now Hodgson and Hill, Jacobs and Fultz were all birds of a feather, had the same plans and were pursuing the same course.

With the few rags they were going to send us as «aid» America and Britain wanted to tell the Albanians: «It is we who are keeping you alive. Your government is going bankrupt, it cannot get along without us, therefore prepare to oppose it, if not with revolts at least with your votes in the elections to the Constituent

Assembly.» And this propaganda, of course, would be spread by their officers who were allegedly to distribute the UNRRA «aid», the second-hand clothing and weevily beans, and would attempt to engage in espionage and extend their network of spies and saboteurs. Proceeding from their imperialist logic, they believed that our people would sell their freedom and independence for some material aid they might send us. The manoeuvre was clear. However, they did not fool us, their aims were very obvious to us.

We reached agreement that the «aid» would come, not under their conditions but under ours. Nevertheless, we kept our eyes open and we foiled any attempt to do us harm.

Finally, almost as if by accident, Jacobs asked me:

«In the documents you have published you say that all the political, economic and military agreements which King Zog had with other states are to be re-examined and annulled. Does this also apply to those with the American government?»

«Yes,» I replied. «These agreements are like Nasredin's nail, (**1**) Mr. Jacobs, but our people pulled out this nail at the Congress of Përmet.

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1 A popular expression to show how someone, by trickery, ensures his ownership of some minor unimportant thing within the property of someone else in order to use it as a pretext to gradually seize the whole property.

Without doubt you have been informed about this Congress and the historic decisions taken there by the representatives of the people. The head of your military mission was present there as an observer and heard with his own ears what was said, what was decided, and who decided on this question. Speaking of this, we also invited an observer from the British mission to Përmet. instructing him not to publish the date and place at which it would be held. He described the Congress as 'unlawful' and did not come. But the Germans and traitors would have come if our partisan brigades had not organized an heroic defence. That is a separate issue, but let us return to your question. The decision on the matter you mentioned was taken at this Congress. At Berat the Democratic Government pledged to carry through to the end the tasks with which it was charged, among which is the examination and cancelling of the agreements which the 'clown of progress', Ahmet Zog, concluded. This is the decision and desire of the people and will certainly be carried out, irrespective of whether those affected are great or small. However, in mentioning it, Mr. Jacobs, you 'forgot' the final phrase of this decision: '...those which are to the detriment of the Albanian people and state.' This means that some of them, especially the bilateral ones, can be re-examined with the American government after the establishment of di-

plomatic relations with it, making the necessary changes in the spirit of equality and reciprocity and stripping them of any content which violates the political and economic independence of Albania. Give the green lights of recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations, Mr. Jacobs, and then we shall look into these matters in detail.»

«Let us wait and hope,» he replied.

These were allegedly peaceful, allied missions, which were «to inform» their governments «about the development of the situation in Albania», «about the level of democracy» which would be established in this country, and about the character of the reforms which the new Albanian government would carry out, in order to «prepare» its recognition by the British and American governments.

This was the appearance they assumed.

In essence they had other aims. But we were not going to swallow the tales of General Hodgson, or of Jacobs or Fultz. Their aims had become clear to us during the time of the war when they told us that, «first we must acquaint ourselves with the situation and then we shall supply you with weapons.» The old aims were hidden behind new phrases, still presented under the disguise of allies, but now with new people and other methods. Both sides smiled at each

other, but both kept their eyes open, because they were making plans to attack us and we to defend ourselves; they were plotting while we were vigilant, we had to discover their secret agents and defeat their subversive activity.

The Anglo-American missions quickly understood the vitality of our people's state power and the unwavering, unyielding stand of our government towards their trickery. They were terrified when they saw with their own eyes that the links of the people with the government were becoming ever stronger, that the people's state power was being consolidated and the first significant victories were being achieved in the work of reconstruction in our country. They set about their work of sabotage in every possible field of the new life that was emerging in Albania, in order to lower the prestige of the Democratic Government and overthrow the people's state power.

Their first task was to establish contact with and organize all the enemies of the people: the war criminals, the beys, the merchants hit by our reforms, the reactionary intellectuals, the spies and immoral women, in brief, all the scum. They collected up their agents and began to finance them, to encourage them and sool them on to attack the people's state power. The headquarters of the missions quickly became centres of espionage, sabotage and armed plots.

The main direction in which they started their work was that of creating political confusion, but here they ran up against the strength of the Party and our people. They aimed to create among the masses the opinion that Albania could not exist on its own, without the political and material aid of Britain and America. These two big states could not tolerate the existence of a communist state like Albania in which the people, led by the Communist Party, were in power. They spread their propaganda openly and in disguised forms.

Without doubt, the British and American missions had created their agency among the reactionary elements of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti during the National Liberation War and after Liberation these elements remained camouflaged and continued their hostile work under the lap.

In order to fight us, the British mission, headed by General Hodgson, used this agency to spread such rumours as, «these boys from the mountains have no experience in governing the country or running the economy», «they will go bankrupt», «it won't be long before they need us», «this wave will pass and then we shall be back in power», «Britain and America cannot permit this situation», etc.

For his part, Fultz hoped that all the former pupils of the Technical School in Tirana, of which

he had been director for a long time during the regime of Zog, would be with him. It never occurred to him that the overwhelming majority of those former pupils, like all the Albanian youth, had been in the front line of the fight against the occupiers. However, in the ranks of these former students there were some whom he had tried to recruit as agents years before, by running a special course for them at night in the home of the vice-principal of the Technical School, Hollingstand. He was sure that these «pupils» would not have forgotten their «teacher». Indeed, Fultz had information that they were engaged in hostile activity. This then was to be Mr. Fultz's main contingent in his efforts to carry out the tasks entrusted to him by his chiefs in Washington.

The American mission also believed that the families of Albanian economic emigrants in the USA would become a support and a source of information and agents. However, Fultz was wrong in this.

He also had expectations of another source. During the time of the war, Fultz had trained his «boys» in the special espionage course which the SBS* had set up in Italy with former Albanian internees after they were released. Some of these elements managed to penetrate into the

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* Secret Balkan Service, a branch of the OSS.

ranks of the partisan army and some even became members of our Party.

A further source of information for the American mission would be some former students who had begun their instruction in espionage in various schools abroad, such as Robert College in Istanbul, under the direction of a certain Fisher, etc.

With these contingents he set to work to ensure that Albania turned its eyes to the «democratic» West, to America.

He had new tasks to give his «boys and students». They had to get into positions in the new state power and work secretly for a coup d'état, or if nothing came of this, internal disturbances or border provocations would be created in order to bring about an armed intervention. They were to carry out sabotage everywhere and spread rumours against the people's state power, whispering that the Atlantic Charter was not respected in Albania, that here there was no other party besides the Communist Party and no newspapers to represent different political tendencies.

The Anglo-American agency was ordered into action.

The British Major, Neel, continued his «mission» begun during the war for the organization of the reactionary clergy in Shkodra. He incited them to cause serious disturbances which were

meant to lead to «civil war» and this was to be the excuse for the «big democracies» to undertake military intervention to quell this war. Following the instructions of the officer of the British mission, the reactionary clergy had linked up with the fugitives in the mountains and discontented elements and had begun to work on their believers to create discontent among them and spread hostile, confusing rumours. The armed actions burst out. Carrying out the orders of the Vatican, too, the residence of the Archbishop in Shkodra was made the «Headquarters» of the reactionary insurgents. However, the detachments of our army defeated the «uprising» within two days. The plan for the landing failed again, just as it had done during the war.

In Kuçova, the British mission, working through its agent Tarasconi, an Italian fascist left in Albania, attempted to destroy the oil-wells and the refinery. The agent was discovered. At his trial he spilled the beans about our «friends».

The agents of the British and Americans encouraged the black market in order to create poverty and discontent among the masses. The overthrown classes were reactivized and infuriated because they could not reconcile themselves to the major transformations being carried out by the people's state power. They could not sto-

mach the Land Reform, the nationalizations, the special taxes on wartime profits, the development of education and culture, hence they fought them, sometimes arrogantly, sometimes by trickery; they sent appeals and complaints to their «umbrellas», the Anglo-American missions, to intervene against these «injustices» which the people were imposing on them. Despite their desires and efforts, however, the «umbrella» saw that it was impossible to come to their rescue directly. They had to continue the struggle against us under cover.

While not relinquishing the above forms, the British and Americans concentrated their attention on the creation of the «opposition». This was essential for them because the time of the election campaign was approaching. They established connections with reactionary elements and disguised traitors in the Democratic Front, such as Shefqet Beja, Riza Dani, Gjergj Kokoshi, Selaudin Toto, Sami Qeribashi, Suat Asllani and others. Some of these were instructed to come out openly at suitable moments, while others were to remain like the men concealed in the «Trojan Horse», so that at the opportune moment they could be released to undermine the Front from within and suddenly stab us in the back.

This was a wide-ranging plan, drawn up and co-ordinated by London and its transatlantic ally.

We heard rumours that reaction was making frantic afforts to create a party which would come out against the program of the Front and as the people say, «There is no smoke without fire.»

The questions which General Hodgson asked in a talk we had when he came to Albania were not without significance.

«Will any group take part in the elections as an opposition outside the Front?» the General wanted to know, after I had replied to his question about political parties.

«The indications up to the present, General, are that there is no such group and there is no reason for one,» I replied. «Do you know why? The war of the Albanian people solved this problem. The war, the people's revolution, got rid of the 'Opposition', because it fell into the lap of the occupiers and compromised itself.»

«Nevertheless, Mr. Hoxha, are there not at least, independent candidates who will compete in the election campaign?» the General asked me.

«There may be individuals who do not like the policy of the new people's state power, General, and this is logical. In our country the Front includes the overwhelming majority of the Albanian people. This is a great victory for democracy. It has not been ordained that without an opposition there is no democracy. Indeed, this

is the broadest democracy, the democracy of the majority,» I continued.

«I was speaking of independent candidates,» interrupted the General.

«The electoral law guarantees everyone the right to put forward his own candidature. In our country, the right to elect and be elected exists for all those who have reached the age required by the law, apart from the former quisling ministers and those who have been sentenced to deprivation of civil rights. For example, if independent candidates are to emerge in the election campaign, in an electoral district of 10 to 12 thousand voters, they must find at least 20 people to endorse their independent candidature. It will be no fault of ours, or of the electoral law, if such individuals are unable to find even so few people to support them in the election. The fault will be their own, because they have aroused the people's hatred and cannot get their support.»

«Is there no press apart from the official one?» asked the General, as if he did not know.

«It is true that there are no press organs apart from the official ones, but everyone, with the exception of enemies, General, has the right to write in the official press,» I told him.

It was not long before we were hearing these things that this representative of foreign

reaction said to me diplomatically, in other, more aggressive forms, from internal reaction.

Other parties could not be created in Albania, not only because the bourgeoisie was weak economically and had still not formed its tradition in this field, but because the Communist Party consolidated itself quickly during the war, and the people accepted it as their sole leadership. After Liberation the social base of the bourgeoisie was eliminated by the reforms of the new state power, thus the basis for its parties was liquidated, too. Injection from abroad remained the only course open, and the British and Americans tried to give it this.

To this end the representatives of reaction organized meetings in the presence of foreigners and these foreigners were none other than members of «allied» missions and journalists. Hence, the mini-parties, and these of course on crutches, could be created only on the initiative and urging of the imperialists, and this is what occurred. Groups to which their authors attached such labels as the «monarchist group», the «resistance group», the «social-democratic group», sprang up like mushrooms after the rain and emerged on the stage to play their role as unfortunate actors in a drama that was a flop.

On instructions from Hodgson and Fultz, the chiefs of the «Opposition» were to openly

oppose the Electoral Law which was to be discussed by the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council (ANLC). This act would close the ranks of reaction, confuse the waverers and would also give the «friends» the opportunity to have their say in one form or another.

The day when the meeting of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council was held in the «Kosova» Cinema, General Hodgson and Mr. Fultz followed its proceedings attentively, expecting the chicken to emerge from the egg which they and their colleagues had been hatching with such care. Reaction began to raise its head precisely when the draft of the Electoral Law was presented and the debate commenced. Gjergj Kokoshi, primed by the British, openly expressed the view of reaction opposed to the draft. The other members of the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council rejected the thesis of the enemy and Gjergj Kokoshi demonstratively walked out of the Front in order to become the leader of the «Opposition» outside the Front, according to the plans of the British and Americans.

This was a signal for reaction to operate out in the open. We knew about its movements, kept our eyes open, had no illusions that all the nationalists in the Front without exception were honest, because some of them had been put into it to undermine it from within. Nevertheless,

our aim was to uncover the enemy and win all the wavering elements to our side.

We marched forward.

The Anti-fascist National Liberation Council decided that the elections would be held on December 2, 1945. The Democratic Front issued the proclamation on the elections. The great political action — the election campaign, commenced. Internal reaction made strenuous efforts to take part in the elections with its own lists. However, it found no support among the people and failed. The lists of candidates of the Front were proclaimed. The people held big rallies everywhere and amongst great enthusiasm and rejoicing, approved the lists presented. The election campaign was turning into a great popular plebiscite.

This was maddening to the enemies. They tried to have the elections postponed. And when this failed, too, they set to work to try to organize a boycott of the elections by spreading rumours like, «there is no democracy», «the Electoral Law is anti-democratic», «there is a one-party dictatorship», and so on, which we had heard directly or indirectly from Hodgson, Jacobs and Co.

Two audiences within one day. Two diametrically opposed stands.

On November 10, 1945, the head of the Soviet Military Mission, came to me and handed me the note of the Soviet government informing

us that it had taken a decision to recognize the Albanian government and establish diplomatic relations with it.

«This is a fresh proof of the sincere friendship of the Soviet people, their government, and Generalissimo Stalin for our people and their government,» I said to Sokolov. «The establishment of these diplomatic relations will further strengthen the friendship of our people with the Soviet people.»

«This is the desire of the Soviet people, too,» said the Colonel.

«We are overjoyed at the high assessment that your government has made of the contribution of the Albanian people to the war against the Italian and German occupiers, as well as of the work of reconstruction of the country.»

«It is the duty of our government to do this, because the Albanian people deserve it,» said the Soviet officer.

«Please transmit to the Soviet people, their government and Generalissimo Stalin the greetings and profound gratitude of the Albanian people and their Democratic Government for this lofty gesture of friendship,» I said in conclusion.

Two or three hours later, Hodgson and Fultz came.

In this healthy revolutionary situation, the British and American governments understood that they were being exposed through this delay

in granting recognition. To escape further exposure, they were obliged to try a political manoeuvre.

General Hodgson spoke first:

«His Majesty's Government,» he said, «has taken the decision to accord recognition to your Government and is ready to send its diplomatic representatives...»

«We are very pleased that at last the British government has been convinced of the great truth which exists in my country...»

The British General interrupted me, «However, this is on condition that your government will guarantee that the elections are conducted in a free and secret manner.»

Fultz nodded his head in approval and immediately looked at me awaiting my reply.

«The Democratic Government of Albania, Gentlemen, is very concerned about the observation of these principles. It has defended them and will defend them with all its strength, because they are consecrated in law by the meetings of representatives of the Albanian people who have shed their blood to establish and protect them. This is the most reliable guarantee that these freedoms and rights will be applied in practice. The Electoral Law ensures the rights of all individuals and groups, apart from fascists, to take part in this important event in the history of our people. We shall respect the

secrecy and freedom of voting with the greatest seriousness,» I stressed.

«His Majesty's Government also demands that the press must be free,» added the General.

«I assure you, General, that the freedom of the press has been and will always remain one of the basic principles of our democracy,» I replied.

«The final request, General Hoxha,» said Hodgson, «is that foreign correspondents should be permitted to observe the procedure of the elections in Albania.»

Fultz nodded again.

«Foreign correspondents are not prohibited from entering Albania, General, and the government has provided all facilities for them. Let them come and see *de visu* how broad and genuine our democracy is.»

«The American government has also decided to recognize your government,» said Fultz at last. «I am expecting the arrival of the note from moment to moment. But according to my instructions, besides the conditions which Mr. Hodgson has presented, the American government also demands the implementation of the treaties or agreements that were concluded between the two countries before April 7, 1939.»

«Mr. Fultz, I have already made this matter clear in a meeting which I had earlier with Mr.

Jacobs. I do not withdraw one comma from what I said then.»

After replying to Fultz, I continued:

«Gentlemen, I shall transmit what you have communicated to me to our government, but I want to say to you in advance that the question of the recognition of the Democratic Government of Albania should not be dragged on so long and, moreover, conditions should not be attached to it. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Poland have recognized our government which emerged from the war and the bosom of this long-suffering people. This is a great satisfaction for the Albanian people which they fully deserve. The other countries, and in the first place, the great allies, Britain and America, which are the closest witnesses of their war, should have done this, too. The fact that conditions are placed on the recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations astonishes us. How can conditions be placed on the recognition of the government of a heroic people who poured out all their energies for freedom, for the great common cause of the allies? How can doubts be cast on the freedom and democracy of this country when the character of the regime is democratic, when the decisions and laws are made and put into practice in the most democratic way?

«It seems to me that these things are completely unreasonable. Both yesterday in the war

and today in peace, everything in our country is decided by the people. I do not wish to dwell on this. The people say: 'You don't need a guide to the village in sight.' The people themselves have solved and are solving their internal problems as masters of their own fate and categorically do not permit anyone else, great or small, to interfere in their internal affairs.

«The Albanian people will not welcome this kind of recognition of their government by the allies, Gentlemen,» I continued, «and at other times, too, they have expressed their dissatisfaction over certain stands of the allies towards their representation in international forums. They have regretted and still regret that their right to membership in the UNO continues to be denied them. The Albanians see this as a denial of the principles for which the anti-fascist war was fought and for which the UNO was created.

«The Albanian people are hearing rumours about preparations for a conference at which the peace treaties with Germany and Italy will be considered. Our country, like all the other victorious nations, ought to be an active participant in this conference. Regrettably, however, it seems that this right, too, is being denied it. Up till now we have received no information and no invitation. I want to ask you, Gentlemen: who more than our people ought to demand a reckoning from fascist Italy? Was it not the Albanian

people who fought and pinned down more than 15 Italian and German divisions? Was this not a very heavy burden on their back? Did they not make an outstanding contribution, in proportion to the size of the territory and population of the country, to the historic victory over fascism? Every honest person in the world now recognizes these merits of the Albanian people. Therefore Italy and Germany owe them a great deal. They must pay for all the countless hideous atrocities which they committed. The Albanian people will persistently demand reparations. This is their legitimate right and they regret that absurd obstacles are being raised, the more so when they hear that these obstacles come from certain allies.

«So, Gentlemen, as I told you at the beginning, I shall present what you have told me to the government and we shall give you our reply.»

I informed the government about the communication which the representatives of the Anglo-American missions made to me and the talk I had with them. The comrades discussed these things, distinguished between the recognition by the Soviet government and the «recognition» by the governments of Britain and America and we sent them notes in reply. (**1**)

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1 The Democratic Government of Albania sent notes in reply to the British and American governments on November 11 and

Sejfulla Malëshova alone took a different view of these recognitions. He considered the notes presented by Great Britain and the United States of America recognition, whereas in fact they were political manoeuvres to encourage internal reaction. He put forward the theses: «Officially, we must put the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA on the one footing», «the question of the recognition of the government by the Anglo-Americans is a condition *sine qua non* for the people's regime in Albania», «the securing of recognition by the Anglo-Americans and admission to the UNO at all costs, even with some concession in their favour», etc. Acceptance of these theses would have constituted a great danger to the freedom and independence of our country. Posing as a great theoretician, he advised us, «We must understand the dialectical development of events, because only then will we be able to understand the concessions, and we must not be afraid of them.» He implanted capitulation and fear of Anglo-American strength in certain elements predisposed to opportunism, who expressed themselves like this: «As a small country, Albania cannot live on its own, it will depend on them.»

His «directives», which began and ended

17, 1945, in the spirit of the replies which Comrade Enver Hoxha gave them there and then, and the discussions in this meeting. (See: Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 3, pp. 174, 177, Alb ed.)

with «must», did not fail to leave some traces. They had been the cause of signs of opportunism in regard to including representatives of reaction in the lists of candidates of the Front and in regard to proposals for a coalition with the Catholic clergy in the elections. Later, he tried to ensure that the foreign policy and the economic policy of our country were orientated towards the West. However, these traces were short-lived. The 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party finally silenced his discordant voice in February 1946.

Regardless of the manoeuvres, efforts and plans of external and internal enemies, the election campaign took place according to the program proclaimed by the Democratic Front. The Party carried out intensive propaganda to expose and defeat these plans, dealt them a mortal blow and further strengthened the political unity of the masses around itself. The elections to the Constituent Assembly ended with success. Of the eligible electors, 90 per cent took part in the elections and 93 per cent of them voted for the candidates of the Democratic Front. The first elections on a democratic basis, which our country had never known before, were a colossal triumph for the unwavering Marxist-Leninist policy of the Party and the correct political line of the Front and a crushing blow to internal and external reaction.

At the first meeting of the Assembly, Comrade Hysni Kapo, on behalf of the deputies of Vlora, moved the motion that Albania should be proclamied a People's Republic. The members of the Assembly unanimously approved this and elected the new government, the People's Democratic Government. The government was charged with preparing the draft of the Constitution, which was put before the masses for discussion. This discussion went on for two months. The suggestions and proposals made strengthened the revolutionary content of the draft. Taking into consideration the opinion of the masses, the Assembly turned this into the Constitution. The new democratic Constitution based the structure and activity of the new state power on the principle: power stems from the people and belongs to them.

Even after these events, which were so important in the life of our people, even after the election of the new government, which was a constitutional government, the Western «allies» still did not establish diplomatic relations. On the contrary, they abandoned the disguise of «allies» and fought us openly with the gloves off on the international plane, too.

When the application for the admission of our country was presented in the United Nations Organization, many delegates supported it. However, the American delegate Stettinius, and the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain Bevin, the

betrayer of the miners in 1926, spoke in favour of «postponement of discussion of this application till later.» According to them, this was «a serious question» which must be examined with great care, as though it were not the same Bevin who, in the past, had made the hypocritical declaration: «The small states must be defended», and this same Stettinius who, in May 1945, sent me a message in which he wrote: «I am very conscious of the ceaseless fight which the Albanian people have waged», «I fully appreciate the sacrifices they have made», and «I know that in the future Albania will make the same contribution to the cause of peace.» «I know...», «I know...» In the past they knew everything but now, apparently, our wartime «allies» were afflicted with amnesia!

At the meeting of the Security Council in London in February 1946, which discussed the admission of Albania to the UNO for the first time, Cadogan spoke in support of the false claims of Greek reaction against our country. «Greece has interests in Albania,» he said, while Bevin declared: «If I am forced to have my say in this meeting tonight, I shall have to vote against the admission of Albania.» Twice in succession, in August 1946 and August 1947, Cadogan used the veto against the admission of Albania to the UNO. In August 1946, Johnson, the delegate of Wall Street, demanded that the Security

Council should not take any decision about Albania. «Albania,» they said, «does not have diplomatic relations with Great Britain and the United States of America, does not recognize the old treaties, Greece is in a state of war with it and has territorial claims against it, it is damaging peace in the Balkans» etc.!

These were the so-called arguments of the imperialist gentlemen to deny Albania membership in the UNO.

The Peace Conference in Paris was approaching. The participation of Albania in it was a legitimate right. But what happened? «It is impossible for us to invite Albania,» said the American delegate Byrnes. The British delegate Lord Alexander also fully supported this view. As though this were not bad enough, in the debates, the representatives of Britain and America spoke of Albania as «a collaborator with Italy», a «defeated country», «not an ally», and so on.

Twice in succession we protested against these injustices. Our People's Assembly published a resolution which rejected with disgust the monstrous accusations raised against Albania and demanded the right of representation in the Conference as a full member, with the same rights as other victorious nations. The struggle between the representatives of the imperialist countries and the Soviet delegate Vishinsky, over the Albanian

question flared up even more fiercely Nevertheless, through the voting mechanism, the Anglo-Americans achieved their aim. Albania was not invited as a member of the conference, but was called only to present its views on the Peace Treaty with Italy.

We sent a delegation there, headed provisionally by Comrade Hysni Kapo. A little later, in view of the importance of the matter, it was considered necessary that I should go personally to head the delegation. The people of France welcomed us with their traditional hospitality. On August 21, 1946, I spoke in the plenary session of the Conference. Not without purpose, in my speech, I presented a short account, supported with figures and facts, of our people's war and after this, in a tone of protest, pointed out the injustice which was being done to our people by denying the blood they had shed and the countless sacrifices they had made against fascism. From the tribune of the Conference I presented documents and statements of the British and Americans, which expressed recognition of our war and our efforts, in refutation of what they had declared recently. The confrontation of their contradictory statements exposed them badly.

Then I dwelt on the pretensions of the delegate of the Greek monarcho-fascists, the Greek prime minister of that time, Tsaldaris,

who, while accusing Albania as an aggressor against Greece(**1**)(simply because fascist Italy attacked Greece from Albanian territory), stressed that Greece was in a state of war with Albania and claimed Southern Albania, on the pretext that this was Greek territory. To reject his theses, from the tribune of the conference I asked him two questions:

«In regard to the various peoples of Europe whose quislings not only sent battalions, but organized whole expeditions against the heroic Red Army, does he consider them aggressors, as he has done in the case of Albania...?

«Would Mr. Tsaldaris consider France, from which Hitler intended to undertake his offensive against Britain, an aggressor?»

The representative of Greek reaction was

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1 A telegram sent to the Foreign Office on November 10, 1944, showed clearly what aims the Greek monarcho-fascists pursued towards our country since the time of the war:

«The State Department have informed member of my staff that they received a memorandum of August 15th from the Greek Embassy asking whether they would be prepared to agree that Albania should be considered and dealt with as an enemy State, and that Greek troops should participate in occupying Albania up to the Skumbi River.» *(War Cabinet Distribution, From Washington to Foreign Office. Earl of Halifax, Nr. 6064, November 10, 1944 FO 371/43554-3370. PRO. Taken from the photocopy of the original in the AIH, Tirana.)*

unable to answer these questions. They pinned down his patrons, too.

At the end of my speech I spoke of the grievous hardships which our people had suffered during the nazi-fascist occupation, the human and material losses which the war had caused our people and presented our demands for reparations from Italy. With utter shamelessness the British delegate Hood declared: «Albania should receive zero dollars.»

At each international forum our cause was defended resolutely by Molotov, Vishinsky and Manuilsky, the representatives of the Soviet Union and the great Stalin, who sympathized so greatly with our people on account of their lofty virtues, valour and loyalty, the great sacrifices they had made and the just and peaceful course they followed. They gave us powerful support in this matter, too. However, the Anglo-Americans and their lackeys continued their struggle against our country, by means of the voting mechanism and other trickery. Nevertheless, we were not discouraged. On the contrary, we fought harder. At a press conference in Paris, I declared:

«Neither the Paris Conference, the Big Four Conference, nor any other conference can discuss the borders of our country, within which there is not an inch of foreign territory. Our borders cannot be discussed and let no one dare touch

them. To try to take an inch of the territory of our country, the Greeks will have to set in motion other mechanisms apart from the vote of the Paris Conference. Let the whole world know that the Albanian people do not permit any discussion of their borders or their territory.

«On the other hand, I protest against the decision taken at the plenary session of the Paris Conference. The Albanian people have not sent their delegation to Paris to render account, but to demand a reckoning from those who have caused them severe damage and whom they have fought fiercely to the end. We have done our duty, just as the Great Powers have done theirs. Our martyrs and our sacrifices are just as sacred to us as the martyrs and the sacrifices of the Great Powers; our rights are just as sacred as theirs.»*

In fact, the Paris Conference was a tribune for us from which international opinion learned of the struggle and heroic deeds of a small people who were unflinching, regardless of the fact that the imperialist powers wanted to trample them underfoot. This was a political and moral success which raised the courage and determination of the Albanian people to pursue the just course on which they had set out, to an even higher level.

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* See: Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 3, pp. 448-449, Alb. ed.

Contrary to what they had declared on the occasion of the preparation of the Peace Treaty with Germany, the American delegate Murphy said without a blush, «Albania did not take part in the war against Germany. Perhaps a few individual Albanians took part in this war, but apart from them, there were other Albanians who fought alongside the Germans.» Of course, there were Albanians who fought shoulder to shoulder with the occupiers, but these were their friends, the Ballists and the Zogites.

When the governments of the USA, Great Britain and France signed the agreement on reparations from Germany, the American and British representatives tried to deny Albania on this occasion, too, the right to receive reparations as a member of the anti-fascist coalition, a thing which nobody could deny. Although the Conference on Reparations from Germany recognized our country's right to receive reparations for the losses which we suffered during the Second World War, these have still not been paid to us, at a time when reparations have been paid to others.

According to an official announcement, the British government had completed the formality of recognition and, moreover, had appointed Thomas Cecil Rapp as its minister in Tirana, but he never arrived. It raised one pretext after another to avoid sending its minister to Tirana.

One of these was that we had allegedly ordered a British officer, who was engaged in identifying the graves of British airmen shot down over our territory during the war, to leave Albania. This was absurd. We granted him permission, but he never appeared to carry out the task he claimed to have.

Another pretext for the failure of the minister to come was the alleged lack of conditions for the normal work of the mission. We behaved correctly towards the American and British missions, while they proved to be hypocrites and always tried secretly to undermine us. General Hodgson, Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Fultz, as well as other members of these missions moved freely all over Albania and made contact with all those they wanted to meet. General Hodgson several times told me of the good impression which our people made on him during the visits he made. Contrary to what they said to us, our government was accused of hindering the members of the British military mission «in their work», by not permitting them to circulate freely and of confining them «to the offices of their mission in Tirana», etc., etc.

The British government involved itself in a ridiculous act on May 18, when its representative in Belgrade handed our legation there a note announcing that the British government would send its minister to Albania immediately.

Less than 20 minutes later the British representative showed up again at our legation in Belgrade and announced the withdrawal of the note, because on May 15 the British warshpis *Superb* and *Orion* had been «unjustly and deliberately» fired on by the Albanian coastal batteries near Saranda. This was the fate of the «minister» who was to come to Tirana.

After these events the class struggle within the country became even more severe. Reaction was involved in wide-spread activities, especially after the coming of Fultz. However, the sons of Mother Albania were not asleep. The enemy groups, urged and organized by the American and British missions, were uncovered one after the other. The illegal activity intended to destroy the people's power and the independence and sovereignty of the country was unmasked.

The trial of Gjergj Kokoshi, Sami Qeribashi and company stripped the «peaceful» missions of the «allies» naked.

The hostile activity of the so-called «group of deputies» headed by Shefqet Beja was uncovered right to its roots. They had tried to use their positions as deputies to destroy the people's state power from within.

Just before the liberation of Albania, a certain Llazar Papapostoli, with the Americanized name of Larry Post, had arrived in Albania. He was to serve as political adviser to the Amer-

ican mission and, at the same time, link up with the old agents in order to lay the initial bases for the groups of spies and saboteurs. However, these groups assumed their organized form especially after the arrival in May 1945 of Mr. Fultz who personally took over the leadership of them. As soon as he arrived, Larry Post had organized a meeting for him with the main agents. They reported to him on their activity and plans, although he was fully informed about them. They also informed him about their first meeting (**1**) and the memorandum they had sent to the Anglo-American missions in April, in which they said, among other things: «We nationalists (read — traitors) have met and decided to fight the Communist Party and its dictatorship (read — the people's state power), and for this we want your help.» Fultz also knew about the request sent to the British by Sami Qeribashi in the name of the

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1 «After the first meeting which was held in March 1945, at which the central committee of our organization, consisting of me, Selaudin Toto, Shefqet Beja, Gjergj Kokoshi and others, was formed,» testified one of the accused (K.K.) at the trial, «I went to the American mission where I reported on all the work of our organization and sought their aid. They promised me unsparing aid and that after the conditions had been created, they would land troops in Albania. They instructed me to tell my associates this so that they would work even harder to increase the bases of the organization and fight the state in an organized way until its forceable overthrow was achieved.» *(From the newspaper «Bashkimi», September 18, 1947.)*

so-called «Resistance Group»: «We are very strong and one spark is enough to set things ablaze and finish the business. If the British troops were landed in Durrës the whole thing would be over within 24 hours.» In his meetings with them, Fultz had instructed the groups to collaborate and intensify not only the political struggle but also the economic struggle, because «in this way the government will be obliged to seek aid from America, and this will be provided with heavy conditions attached.»

The program of the enemy groups also included terrorism. They did everything in their power to kill leaders and cadres of the Party and the state. Sami Qeribashi had instructed his group, «We must kill Myslim Peza and spread word among the people that the communists have killed him, in order to arouse a wave of anger and split the Front.» According to information which reached us, they had similar designs on me and other leaders, also. However, they could do nothing to Babë Myslim and the others, because the Party and an entire people protected them.

At their trial these enemies admitted those aims from their own mouths, admitted publicly that the premises of the Anglo-American missions had been turned into workshops where plots for assassinations and sabotage were hatched up, where plans were drafted for armed attacks and

landing of troops from abroad. Their trial brought to light the whole subversive policy of Anglo-American imperialism, including the plans, the tactics and the methods employed against our democracy.

The uncovering of the saboteurs in the draining of the Maliq swamp was important. The evil weeds planted by Fultz never succeeded in establishing themselves. Their activity was defeated. The mask was torn from Fultz, that «authority» on Albania, who was defeated along with them. Several of his former «pupils», who, on his instructions, had long been carrying out sabotage in the work of draining the swamp, were uncovered. The trial would completely expose them. This was a great blow to the American mission and especially to Fultz. Jacobs and Fultz were terrified and they left Albania before the trial of the saboteurs at the Maliq swamp began. Some members of the American mission remained to follow the events. The British mission had left previously.

On the eve of its departure, the American mission demanded that we permit a cruiser and a destroyer to enter the port of Durrës to embark them. The request was made at a time when the British warships were continuing their provocative activities off our southern coast. We protested to the UNO because we knew that monstrous aims were hidden behind this proposal

at those moments of provocations against us. The mission departed in the middle of November 1946, after being transported by our ships to the two American ships which waited outside our territorial waters. This closed the chapter of this allegedly peaceful mission which was, in fact, subversive and came to Albania to cause us damage rather than to help us.

It emerged from the testimony of the accused that, apart from Fultz and the members of his mission, two responsible members of the UNRRA mission, Woodard and Jones, also had a hand in the activity to sabotage the work of draining the Maliq swamp. We sent the mission a note in which we declared these two members of the mission personae non gratae. The head of the mission Floud was very indignant about this. He sent me a letter seeking a meeting to protest about this and to inform me of a decision of his. I understood that they, too, were packing to leave. «The sooner the better,» I said to myself. We had had more than enough of them.

Meanwhile I received a radiogram from Koçi Xoxe and Nako Spiru who were in Belgrade. As though from the peak of Mount Olympus, they wrote, «it is not good that UNRRA should leave or that we should make political issues out of minor questions of espionage. Therefore, we think that at the trial one eye should be closed

to UNRRA and the matter settled in one way or another even by making some concession.»*

I informed the comrades about this radiogram. We decided: «No concession! Let the UNRRA mission clear out if it likes.» We would be rid of another thorn in our flesh.

I sent for Floud.

As far as I remember the meeting was held in the first half of November 1946. Floud seemed ill at ease. After thanking me for fulfilling his request, he went straight into his theme:

«I sought a meeting with you, Mr. Prime Minister, to clear up a matter which is very serious and worrying for us. Your Government has demanded that Mr. Woordard should leave Albania and Mr. Jones who is on service outside Albania at present, should not return to his duties here. I have informed Mr. La Guardia (**1**) about this. I also informed him that the mission should be withdrawn from Albania next week. I have ordered the delivery of supplies to be suspended. What worries me most is the fact that the Albanian Government has based its decision on certain things said by the engineers and technicians accused of acts of sabotage at the trial which is being held here in Tirana. If these

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* Radiogram sent to Comrade Enver Hoxha, November 12, 1946, CPA.

1 At that time director general of UNRRA.

two members of my mission had really wanted to sabotage the economic development of Albania, it would have been very easy for them to recommend the cutting off of supplies. UNRRA is also giving assistance in carrying out the land reclamation projects and this is due to the recommendations made by Mr. Jones and Mr. Woodard.

«The only condition on which the mission can carry out its work in these circumstances of distrust towards UNRRA,» he continued, «is the publication of a declaration by your Government which states categorically that UNRRA and its members have nothing at all to do with the slanderous accusations made at the trial. Otherwise, as I said a little earlier, I have no alternative but to withdraw the mission and to this end I have asked them to send a ship to embark it next week.»

It was self-evident what Mr. Floud was driving at with his introduction in the form of an ultimatum. He and his bosses thought that in the face of their pressure and the difficulties which we were encountering in the reconstruction of the country, we would be forced to submit to them. On the basis of information which we had and the testimony of the accused at the trial which was published in the newspaper «Bashkimi» and which I followed carefully every

day, the aim of the imperialists and their agents, foreign or Albanian, within Albania, was to slow down the work on the reclamation and other projects, to lower the morale of the workers by creating difficulties which could be avoided, so that they would walk off the job and people would think that without aid from abroad through UNRRA we would fail in the great task we had undertaken. Under the direction of Harry Fultz, members of the UNRRA mission, too, had worked towards this objective of sabotaging our work.

«I am surprised at what you are telling me, Mr. Floud,» I said. «It seems to me your decision has not been carefully weighed. However, do as you wish. Our note refers to two persons who hold responsible positions in your mission, who have engaged in activity harmful to our people's state power, which damages its policy and violates our democracy. You claim that you have come to assist us, but the facts testify to the opposite. Similar things have occurred with your personnel at other times, too. Was it not a journalist, Mrs. Cullen, who with evil aims gathered information from degenerate individuals? Was it not Mrs. Pennington who expressed great hostility towards us when she told our people that 'the government is killing good Albanians'?! To what 'good' Albanians was she

referring — the war criminals and the quislings?

«You are well aware of these facts, Mr. Floud,» I continued «We have informed you of each such occurrence, but you have not adopted the stand necessary to prevent such actions from becoming a continuous pattern. These officials of your mission have openly joined in the choir of Hodgson, who went so far as to say, 'Out with Hoxha!' You, personally, have declared that UNRRA is a non-political organization. Mr. Jacobs has expressed his regret to me that sometimes the USA looks at UNRRA only from the political angle. Indeed, during his visit here, Mr. Rooks expressed the same opinion to me.»

«Nevertheless, Mr. Hoxha, the demand for the withdrawal of Mr. Woodard,» said Floud, «means that the Government of Albania agrees with what the accused have said and this forces me to the conclusion that this stand on its part creates a situation in which it is impossible for our mission to stay here any longer. Am I right, Mr. Hoxha?»

«Not at all,» I replied. «This matter is known world-wide and we have no alternative but to advise you to act as our note says. With the publication of the statements of the accused in the Albanian press, a thing for which no blame falls on us, you ought to take measures to avoid the further discrediting of your mission.

In my opinion, the matter is urgent, it needs a solution now.»

«I'm afraid the Albanians make no distinction between the members of UNRRA and the members of the American mission. Is it not the case that the relations between the Government of the USA and your Government, which have not been good recently, have had an influence on this?» he replied.

«The state of relations between our Government and the American Government could not influence our stand towards your mission. On the contrary, I suspect that our relations with the American and British Governments may have influenced the stand of your mission towards us. As far as we are concerned, the state of these relations in no way affects the good feelings of the Albanian Government and people for the American people. Regardless of the activities of Mr. Fultz, the Albanian people and their Government still nurture sympathy for the American people,» I told him.

«Nevertheless,» began Floud, «after the engineers' statements, no Albanian will associate with the members of our mission and indeed the Albanian officials do not speak to our observers or give them any information. Therefore, it must be made clear to the Albanians that the relations between the American Government and the Al-

banian Government do not in any way affect the stand of the latter towards the UNRRA mission, and that this mission is exonerated from the accusations made in court. This can be done only by means of a public declaration by your Government,» said Floud repeating his earlier demand.

«That is impossible,» I told him bluntly. «I explained to you why we took this step. Our people's state power is so strong that it will cut off the hands of anyone who dare lay a finger on the interests of the country and is not afraid of the presence here of two exposed agents. You have no right at all to state *a priori* that the accusation made at the trial is not true. Slanders and false accusations are not fabricated there, Mr. Floud. It is the agents in the service of foreigners, caught red-handed, who willynilly are spilling the beans about those who incited, inspired and financed them. Why did Mr. Fultz leave at this time, when the trial was proceeding? His name figures at the head of the list of those who are accused of activity against our new state.»

Mr. Floud did not know what to say!

So ended my final meeting with the head of the mission of this «philanthropic» organization which tried to «assist» us.

Even later, «aid» was offered to us from across the Atlantic, this time by President Eisenhower, personally! «The Albanian people are not

suffering for lack of the American president's beans,» we replied. «He would do better to feed the millions and millions of unemployed in the United States of America.» Since they failed with this form, too, the imperialists began to drop «aid for the people» from aircraft: small cellophane bags with two lumps of sugar, a reel of cotton and a couple of needles!

«What a come-down for them!» said our people, deriding the manoeuvres of the Americans and the British.

An unprecedented provocation towards our country was that of Great Britain with the so-called «Corfu Channel incident».

After the Second World War, the Mediterranean Zone Mine Clearance Board was formed. Such an undertaking was correct and necessary. Regrettably, Albania, whose shores are washed by two seas, was deprived of representation in this international forum, even as an observer. The Anglo-Americans who made the law in the Board, justified this on the grounds that we had no mine-sweepers! It is true that we had no mine-sweepers but we had extensive territorial waters mined by the Germans, and the decisions on clearing this area should have been taken with our participation. On the urging of the British and the Americans, the Board had decided that the Greek Navy should clear

the mines from our territorial waters. However, in the situation when the Greek monarcho-fascist government had publicly declared that it was in a state of war with Albania, when the ships of its fleet, with and without flags, committed repeated brutal provocations, penetrated into our ports and seized Albanian citizens and boats, when it was claiming our Korça and Gjirokastra, to send the Greek navy to «clear the mine fields» was tantamount to throwing benzine on the fire. This would have meant that we were to open the door of our sheepfold to the wolf. Such a thing we would never do. Therefore we kept vigilant watch day and night.

In this very complicated situation, in May 1946, two foreign ships, flying no flags, without warning entered Albanian territorial waters in the vicinity of Saranda. Our coastal batteries, which were on full alert for the reasons I mentioned, signalled to them to withdraw, but the ships continued on their course. Then, thinking that this was a provocation by Greek ships, our batteries fired a warning salvo. Only after this the ships raised the British flag and withdrew.

It was not long before the British government tried to blame us for this incident and insisted that we apologize publicly. In a very correct manner we expressed our regret to the British government over what had occurred. At the same time, we pointed out to it that the fault

was in no way ours, because in such circumstances the coastal batteries of any other country would have done what ours did, without in any way violating the international norms of navigation. Finally we advised the British government that its ships must not enter Albanian territorial waters without the knowledge and permission of our government, not only because this was a violation of our sovereignty, but also because our demands were within the international norms of navigation, which must be applied rigorously in any situation, and especially in the existing circumstances of our country.

Dissatisfied with this reply, the British government persisted with its demand and «retorted» with the allegation that we had no right to make a uniteral declaration of a state of emergency(!). This was greatly to the liking of the Greek Prime Minister Tsaldaris. Meanwhile, we heard that Lord Alexander had demanded that his government should bombard Albania in retaliation. It did not accept this proposal, but Mr. Attlee recommended to the British Admiralty that «if they open fire, you should return the fire.» Britain was deceiving itself that it was still *Queen of the Seas** and could apply its gun-boat policy as easily as in the past. However, times had changed. The territorial waters of Albania

* English in the original.

were under the control of a whole people on the alert.

Some months passed and British ships did not appear again in our territorial waters. We thought that the British government had learned its lesson, but as the people say, «the fox never forgets its craft.» On October 22, 1946, four British warships emerged from the Corfu Channel, sailing towards the north. They left the international waters on the port side and again, without informing us, entered our waters. It was clear that Britain was seeking a pretext for an international conflict. I gave orders to keep calm and open fire only if they tried to make a landing.

Another report reached me from Saranda: When the warships were approaching the coast, there was a sudden explosion and two of them went on fire. An Albanian motor-boat had gone to give aid and to clear up the reason for the violation of our territorial waters. The British had not deigned to give any explanation for this flagrant violation of our territorial integrity and had driven off our people with abuse.

The Anglo-Americans wanted to exploit this incident as a pretext for a landing. As we learned later, the four ships, two cruisers to create a provocation, and two destroyers were sailing to the Bay of Argostoli in the south of Corfu. Why did they pass to the north when their destination was in the south? It is quite absurd

to go from the north to that bay, travelling right round Corfu. This is like trying to reach behind your head to grasp your right ear with your left hand. Why did they come so close to our coast and so far from international waters? A representative of the British Admiralty declared that with this «cruise» the British government wanted to test «whether the Albanian government had learned to behave itself yet.» Possibly the mines had been laid by the Germans during the war, but the probability cannot be excluded that they had been put there by the British themselves to create a conflict. The bosses of the British Admiralty could have sent the ships there knowing full well that they were coffin ships. Of course the sailors on board them could not have known that they were sailing to their death.

Several days later the British government «informed» us in very harsh and threatening language that soon they would clear the mines from the Corfu Channel. «Agreed,» we replied. «but in international waters, and not in ours.» Again in a brutal threatening tone they informed us that they would enter Albanian territorial waters, too. We publicly denounced this decision as a violation of international norms, an impermissible violation of the territorial integrity and independence of our country. We asked the UNO to intervene immediately and to stop this piratical act of Great Britain. The UNO did nothing.

On November 12, thirty British warships, accompanied by aircraft, appeared, entered Albanian waters and sailed in battle formation towards the Saranda coast. The situation was extremely critical. We were all eyes and ears and anxiously followed the reports which came in. We repeated the decision to open fire on them only if they attempted to land.

The warships «cruised» back and forth in our waters.

«They are clearing mines,» the comrades reported from Saranda.

The same activities were repeated on November 13.

«Open fire on them,» one of Tito's generals told us. But we, being genuine Marxists, took no notice of the «order» of the Yugoslav general, instead we carried out the advice of the people: «Measure seven times before you cut.»

On the one hand, we followed all the actions of the thirty British warships vigilantly, and on the other hand, we made stern protests to the British government and the United Nations Organization over this open provocation, this further flagrant violation of our territorial integrity. Regrettably, as on the other occasions, the United Nations Organization turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to these dangerous events. It not only took no measure against Britain, but on the contrary, came out in its support.

Completely without foundation, Britain accused Albania in the international forums of responsibility for the «Corfu Channel incident», alleging that either it had mined this region itself, or it knew who had laid the mines, and for this demanded compensation. We protested energetically against this accusation. It was a repetition of the story of the wolf and the lamb, as in La Fontaine's fable.

At the beginning of 1947, the British government raised the question in the Security Council of the United Nations Organization. The Security Council asked for an Albanian delegation to clear up the matter. A delegation, headed by Comrade Hysni Kapo, went there and defended the truth with dignity. Regardless of the protests of our delegation, however, the Security Council, by majority of votes laid the blame on Albania! The representative of the Soviet Union used the veto and then the Security Council, under the pressure and influence of Britain, was compelled to draft a resolution, which recommended that the question should be placed before the International Court at the Hague.

Once again the innocent party was placed in the dock.

At the Hague we publicly declared once again that the Albanian Government knew nothing about the laying of mines, that it had at its disposal neither mines, nor means, nor experts to lay

them. Our delegation presented facts to prove this there. The outstanding French jurist and politician, Mr. Pierre Cot, who rose in defence of our rights, found the roots of this event in the formula of the British reactionary circles «to teach others how they should behave.» Therefore, before the court, he stated that not only the small and the weak, but the big and the powerful, too, must «learn to behave themselves».

From the facts which the Albanian delegation presented, and the defence of our right by well-disposed friends of our country, the court at the Hague was obliged to reject the possibility that the mines had been laid by us, but under the pressure and through the machinations of Great Britain, in April 1949, it decided to consider Albania to blame, «because it knew about them and had not reported them»!

This was a flagrant injustice by an institution of «justice». The court came out with the conclusion, unsupported by facts, that «on November 12-13 Britain had violated the sovereignty of Albania, but had not done so on October 22»! It was quite obvious that Albania had to be described as the guilty party, because this was the order and the desire of the «greater power». Moreover, in December 1949, the court at the Hague decided «in the name of justice», that Albania should pay Britain 843,947 pounds sterling in compensation. We refused to accept this deci-

sion, not only because we were not to blame, but also because the decision on the sum of compensation was not within the competence of that court. We did not pay it and never will pay it. It is not we who should pay.

But what occurred over this «compensation»? As I wrote above, we did not accept the decision and refused to pay. Then, in an arbitrary manner, Britain found another way to secure it. And here begins the history of our quarrel with Britain over the question of the stolen gold.

With the capitulation of fascist Italy in September 1943, the nazi army stole the Albanian gold deposited in the Banca d'Italia in Rome. The Albanian state's ownership of this quantity of gold was recognized in the protocol signed in the spring of 1944 between representatives of the Foreign Ministry of Germany and representatives of the Albanian quisling government. As if this were not sufficient, the commander of the Hitlerite troops in Tirana, in October 1944 also seized the gold which had remained in the National Bank in Albania, claiming that he would deposit it in the Bank of Shkodra.

After the end of the Second World War, a considerable quantity of gold hidden by the German nazis, who had looted it from other peoples, including the Albanian people, was discovered in the Merkers salt-pans of Germany. A tripartite

commission was set up to return this wealth to the countries it belonged to. The Albanian government presented to this commission its claim supported by documents for the return of 2,454 kg 874.5 g of pure gold. Our claim was considered just. Nevertheless, the commission informed us that it would return only about half the gold claimed to Albania, as an initial share. However, not one gram was given us. Great Britain, which had both the walnut and the hammer in its hand, held this gold which had been deposited in the Bank of England, as «compensation» for what had occurred in the Corfu Channel. We protested energetically, and as a result, an arbitration commission was set up to study the question again. The arbitration commission examined it, and although it came to the conclusion that the gold belonged to Albania, decided not to hand it over, on the pretext that it was subject to a claim by a third party.

Our persistent struggle for justice continued. Later, too, the tripartite commission declared that our claim for 2,454 kg 874.5 g of pure gold was just and that 1,121 kg 451.7 g should be returned to us. But as this same commission informed us again, this quantity «was subject to a claim by a third party and the dispute over this matter was in the process of settlement.»

We have waited a long time for this lawful property of the Albanian people to be delivered

to us, but to this day it remains in the claws of the lion.

The reparations due to them were paid to all the countries of the anti-fascist coalition, while we were given an extremely small sum from Italy and not a penny from Germany in compensation for all the colossal human and material damage the Hitlerite Reich caused us. The decision on the return of the gold stolen by the nazis has been carried out for all the respective countries with the exception of Albania. This is an unpardonable injustice, a monstrous robbery, and a flagrant violation of international rights and decisions. All the gold must be returned to the Albanian people unconditionally, together with the interest accrued in the intervening years and demurrage, because this gold represents their sweat and blood. This matter cannot be linked with the so-called compensation over the «Corfu Channel incident», either. This is a pretext which Albania has never recognized and never will recognize. The attempts of the British government to link these two questions are out of order. They are simply trickery and piratical actions.

We have publicly declared more than once that we will not enter into discussion about the establishment of diplomatic relations with Britain if that state does not return this wealth to the Albanian people. If the British government

really desires the establishment of relations with socialist Albania, in the first place, it must honour the obligations it has towards Albania and return the gold it is holding. Only after it has put an end to this arrogant, hostile, piratical stand towards us, can it expect to sit down at the round table with Albania. Otherwise we shall never agree to sit down and talk with any British government, and all the progressive forces and the British people must understand thoroughly that the blame for this does not lie with us. Right is on our side and however long it may be delayed, it will triumph.

The Anglo-American military, civilian, and «philanthropic» missions broke their necks. However, the struggle of the imperialists against our country has never ceased.

When they were leaving Albania, the British officer Neel and the American Henderson declared: «We shall come back in another way.» And truly they continued the struggle in other ways.

The organization of all the remnants of the Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti in exile began under the patronage of officers of the CIA and SIS. The American colonel Herbert and the British officers Amery, McLean and others, who were charged with this task, found it very difficult. They understood that they had to deal with a pack of jackals and a herd of rabbits, but... it

had to be done. Each of the heads of reaction in exile defended the interests of the employer who fed him. Right from the start they began to quarrel, abuse one another and come to blows. Nevertheless, a certain unity was achieved in a so-called «Free Albania Committee», attached to which a «military staff» was set up, headed by the «strategist» Abaz Kupi. However, the quarrels continued and the contradictions became more acute. In exile, the «crabs» were tearing one another to pieces. Quarrels(**1**)existed not only between the chiefs, but also between the chiefs and the misled individuals, who got caught up in the current of betrayal and who had been promised «para-

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1 These quarrels had their origin during the war. In his book, Amery says:

«The common danger had united Republicans with Monarchists, but their feud was revived by their common catastrophe. Abaz Kupi accused the Ballists of discrediting the Nationalist cause in the eyes of the British by their association with the Germans: Midhat Frashëri maintained that the Communists might still have been suppressed if the Zogists had joined forces with him at the beginning of the civil war. Such recriminations might appear academic, but they disguised a natural and urgent conflict of interests. The two parties could no longer help each other in Albania; they might soon rend each other in exile; and, now that resistance had ceased, Zogists and Ballists appeared as rivals for British favour, rather than as allies against the Partisans.» *(Sons of the Eagle, London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1948, pp. 320-321.)*

dise» by the «fathers of the nation». They were beginning to understand what they had been reduced to and were beating their heads with their own fists. There were some who repented and wanted to return and a few did so, while the majority, poisoned by bourgeois demagogy, went even further on their course and ended up in the training camps to be used as cannon fodder in the interests of the ambitions of the imperialists and the heads of Albanian reaction. It was logical that this would occur. The history of the war had taught us this. Nevertheless, we made official requests to the British and American governments for the extradition of war criminals, not only Albanians, but also Italians and Germans, who had stained their hands with blood in Albania and were now under their jurisdiction. Contrary to the declarations and the joint commitments of the allies during the war and the decisions which were taken later on this question, they turned a deaf ear and did not hand them over to us. On the contrary, they kept the chiefs in luxury hotels, while they trained their «fighting men» in special camps and courses in Rome, Munich, London, Athens and elsewhere.

At first, they used aircraft to drop leaflets against us, which the people gathered up, handed over, or burnt. The imperialists did this to prepare the terrain for dropping in Albanian criminals by parachute or infiltrating them into our

country through Italy or some other neighbouring country, to carry out sabotage, assassinations, etc. The imperialists had pinned all their hopes on these degenerate elements who, with a dagger in one hand and gold in the other, tried to intimidate our people or bribe them into becoming their followers.

Deceiving themselves that Albania at that time was the weakest link of the countries of people's democracy, the British and American imperialists tried to undermine our people's state power. They had not reckoned on its strength, which was based on the people, on the cleverness, determination, vigilance and swiftness in action of our organs of security and people's defence.

Blinded by their hostility towards our country, and having no accurate knowledge of the Albanian reality, the imperialists soon found themselves in great difficulties. As the criminals themselves testified in court, Oakley-Hill, Stirling and others reappeared on the scene at these moments when things were hotting up. We forced the captured agents to make radio contact with their espionage centres in Italy and elsewhere, hence to play our game, totally deceiving these centres, which showed themselves to be completely incompetent and short-sighted. Things went so far that they dropped us whatever we dictated to their agents who had fallen into the trap. The bands of the criminals who were

dropped in by parachute or infiltrated across the border at our request, came like lambs to the slaughter, while the armaments and other materials which they dropped or brought with them went to our account. In a word, they came and we were waiting for them. We put them on trial and after all their filthy deeds had been exposed, we gave them the punishment they deserved. The espionage centres which sent these bands became alarmed and tried to alter their methods of action against the new Albania and its glorious leadership — the Party of Labour. But up till now, events have proved that everything they have attempted against us has run into a granite rock and been smashed to smithereens. History has the same fate in store for them in the future, too.

Our famous radio game, the wisdom, justice and the revolutionary vigilance of the Albanian people brought about the ignominious failure of the plans of the foreign enemy, and not the merits of a certain Kim Philby (**1**), as some have claimed. Those who tried to bite Albania left not only their teeth, but also their bones in this sacred land. The security organs and our people's defence forces were always in readiness and, assisted by the people, crushed the criminals and assassins. A few escaped by crossing the border to carry the sad tidings to their mentors, while

1 He worked in SIS but was in the service of Soviet intelligence.

the others were crushed in the vice of the people.

Although the Albanian reactionaries in exile were reduced to a dreadful state, whenever the class struggle inside or outside our country became more acute, they raised their heads. Imperialism gave them the necessary injection and they reactivized themselves. This is what occurred after the betrayal of Titoite revisionism emerged openly in 1948 and it was repeated again in 1961 and later. Precisely when our country was fighting tooth and nail against Khrushchev in 1961, Abaz Kupi was invited to London and welcomed with honours by Amery, the British Minister of Aviation, by the M.P.McLean, the retired Colonel Smiley and the journalist Kemp, while Amery's wife, the daughter of Prime Minister McMillan, was present at every activity which was organized for Bazi i Canës by his old friends during his three-day visit. That same year, reaction prepared yet another farce: it «approved» the initiative of Zog's son to proclaim himself «king», and the Americans appointed General Blomberg and the British appointed Kemp as his aides-de-camp.

All this interference and pressure, the unscrupulous provocations, like that in the Corfu Channel, the use of the veto against the rights of our Republic in the international arena, the holding of the gold, and many other hostile acts, are the continuation of the savage struggle which

the American, British and other imperialists and world reaction have never ceased for one day or even one minute against our country.

The story of how we dealt with this long, continuous chain of hostile activities, which were carried out by external enemies in collaboration with Albanian reaction, and which I have done my best to outline briefly here, constitutes only a fragment of the militant history of our heroic Party. The struggle against and triumph over this activity retain their value as great lessons, both about the period in which the events which I mention took place, and about the subsequent course of the Party to defend our freedom and independence, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and socialism in Albania.

The bitter lessons of history have always added to our vigilance, and that is why we have been able to detect, to unmask and to defeat the diabolical plans of false friends.

The consistently correct revolutionary stand of the CPA during the war and in the first post-Liberation years, towards the hostile anti-Albanian policy and interference of the Anglo-Americans and towards every other problem played its vital role in the achievement and consolidation of the complete independence of our country. Later, the experience of this stand was to serve us in determining and pursuing a correct prin-

cipled, open and consistent policy towards friends and enemies of every type. When it placed itself at the head of the Anti-fascist National Liberation War our Party was young, newly formed. It grew bigger and stronger, tempered itself in battle, gained a wealth of experience and assimilated the science of Marxism-Leninism. This made it invincible, able to discover and cope successfully with the dangers which threatened it in all stages of the revolution. If it had gone to sleep, if it had rested on its laurels, neither the Party nor socialist Albania would be in existence today.

The National Liberation War is one of the most glorious chapters in the history of our people, but it is also one of the greatest proofs of the political and ideological maturity of our Party and of the correctness of its Marxist-Leninist line. The Party inspired the working masses of town and countryside and made them conscious that they must unite, take up arms against the nazi-fascist occupiers and the local traitors and triumph over them. After countless sacrifices our people, under the leadership of the Party, drove out the foreign occupiers, discovered and unmasked the behind-the-scenes manoeuvres and raised insurmountable barriers to the secret plans of «allies» and their friends, overthrew the reactionary classes and established their

own power for the first time in history. That which is won through blood, sweat and sacrifice is cherished dearly, and so we have beautified and strengthened the poverty-stricken and battered Albania of the past, have made it honoured throughout the world, an unconquerable fortress of socialism and communism on the shores of the Adriatic. Its invincible strength has been and is based on the just cause it champions. Our Party took up this cause and has proved to have the ability and foresight to defend it. This is a cause of a people who are living and building their own life and freedom.

Our country does not interfere with any other country, but it has never permitted and never will permit anyone to interfere and meddle in our internal affairs and to damage the free and happy life which we are building and enjoy. There are hundreds of millions of people who admire, respect and support socialist Albania, because it defends and adheres to such a policy. However, there are some, the imperialists and their lackeys, who say that we have isolated ourselves from the «civilized world». These gentlemen are mistaken. Both the bitter history of our own country in the past and the reality of the «world» which they advertize, have convinced us that it is by no means a «civilized world», but a world in which the bigger and the stronger oppresses and skins the smaller and the weaker,

in which money and corruption make the law, and injustice, perfidy and backstabbing triumph.

The transformations in socialist Albania are very profound, the victories are magnificent, our strength is invincible, but we must never forget the lessons of history. Our Party and people must always bear in mind the hostile activity from abroad or from within — this they must never forget. They must never nurture the slightest illusion that the imperialists and the capitalists change their nature, become reasonable, peaceful and relinquish their aims. There must never be any idea that the class struggle between us and the external and internal enemies can be toned down in the least.

We have suffered at the hands of invaders, we have suffered at the hands of false friends, but this has not made and does not make us isolate ourselves, as they accuse us. We are vigilant and take strong defence measures against external and internal enemies. We have been disillusioned by false friends, too, but we have confidence in the hundreds of thousands of friends and well-wishers of socialist Albania. We have always had many friends and well-wishers all over the world. The long and irreconcilable struggle with perfidious friends, their savage activity and subversive aims, have **never** caused us to lose our trust in true friends. At all times our friends have experienced the strength of the Albanians'

given word, while the enemies have experienced their boundless anger and merciless fight.

We are fully convinced that with a courageous revolutionary stand, in unity of thought and deed with the genuine Marxist-Leninists, in friendship with the oppressed and exploited peoples and with the honest and progressive folk throughout the world, we shall be able to cope with blockades and storms wherever they may come from. Right is on our side, the future belongs to us. This gives us courage and strength to speak the truth openly and sincerely, to reply resolutely to whoever smiles at us hypocritically, to whoever conceals the dagger and has venom in his heart. Our policy is consistent. It does not swing to the changing breezes of international events. Its basis is not the secret diplomacy of faceless men, not bargains struck behind the scenes, not the ruble or the dollar. It is not a policy of opening the doors to friends and enemies indiscriminately. We have not allowed and will not allow the wolf to get into our sheepfold. We have disposed of the wolf with the bullet and we shall continue to do so, although they accuse us of isolating ourselves from the «civilized world». A people and a party who are building socialism, who are defending a cause which is the cause of all the peoples of the world, cannot be isolated simply because they do not allow anyone to da-

mage the freedom and independence won at the cost of their own blood.

The people, with the Party of the working class at the head, are and must be vigilant at every moment, must never be deceived by some «sweet» word from reaction, must never think that the enemies «are toning down the struggle» against us, must never be deceived by the temporary changes in international circumstances, but must take and judge them for nothing other than what they are, we must take advantage of them and will continue to do so without making any concession to enemies, to reactionary bourgeois-revisionist circles, so that our correct revolutionary Marxist-Leninist stand is never «liberalized».

While putting enemies of every kind in their place, at the same time, we must always love, honour and assist the friends of socialist Albania and we should do this with unerring Marxist-Leninist judgement, with iron logic, and never simply because «they are our friends.» In life there are friends and friends, therefore we must know how to distinguish between them. Albania is a small state, like a ship sailing in an ocean with mighty waves, therefore we must have it tight and trim, must steer it well, must not lose our bearings, otherwise we shall founder in the savage waves of this furious ocean.

The working class and its Party must rely

on their own strength first of all, must never forget the interests of the people, must always rely on the people's abilities and judgement, must always consult the people's opinion, but never as a mere formality.

The guarantees for our present and future, to make socialist Albania unconquerable and impassable to our enemies, are the continuous strengthening of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the extension and consolidation of our socialist democracy, and all-round and unceasing economic and social development. The creation of a strong independent economy, capable of solving all the complicated problems of socialist and communist construction with its own forces, capable of successfully withstanding the imperialist and revisionist pressures and blockades and keeping itself undamaged by the death-dealing crisis which has seized the capitalist and revisionist world, is indispensable in order to have a free and independent socialist Albania.

Our strength is based on the correct revolutionary line of the Party, on the unbreakable Party-people unity, which is based on our revolutionary doctrine, Marxism-Leninism. Against this strength all the plots and attacks of enemies will be defeated and all the disguises will be torn from false friends of Albania. Our people must always be realistic in everything, in policy, in

the economy, in investments and in expenditure. They must always keep in mind that in order to cope with this danger measures must be taken in advance so that we are not taken by surprise. And one is not taken by surprise when he fights against euphoria, self-satisfaction and unfounded optimism.

Let the enemies «bewail» the fact that our people are always in struggle! Life itself is struggle, and when this struggle is won life becomes beautiful and prosperous, when it is defended with struggle, it never becomes gloomy and it is worthwhile living. This is a great lesson from our history. This is also my unshakeable belief which the Party with its ideology, Marxism-Leninism, has embued in me and which has been implanted in me by my people, whom I have served and will continue to serve, sparing nothing, during my whole life, by fighting as their loyal soldier, arms in hand, with revolutionary fire in my heart, with the Marxist-Leninist ideology in my head, against every type of external and internal enemy of the Party, the working class, the people, socialism and communism.

I am fully confident that the Party, the working class and the people will always be on the alert, always vigilant, always on the revolutionary offensive to overcome the difficulties of

growth and to avert and overcome the possible dangers.

In this way their present and future will be unshakeable and brilliant.

1975

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